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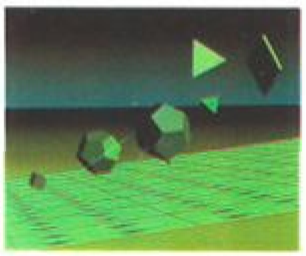

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THIRD DIMENSION

The lowdown on Isometric Exploration games

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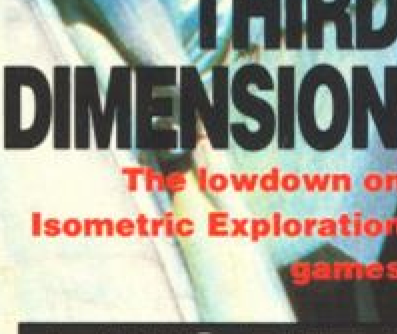

CARRIER COMMAND and CONQUEROR

Rock solid action, red hot reviews

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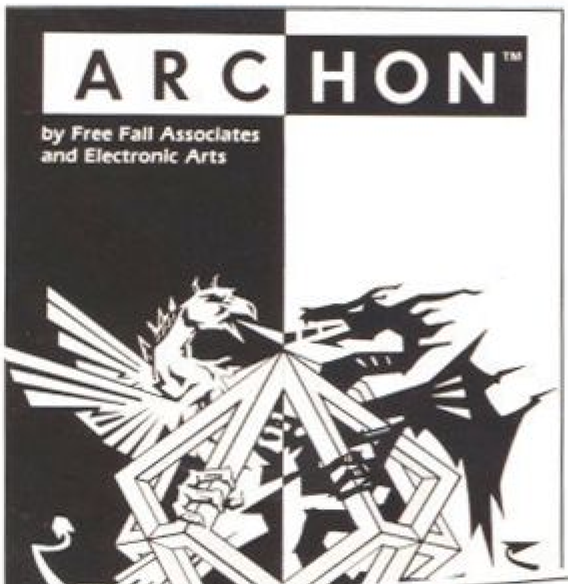
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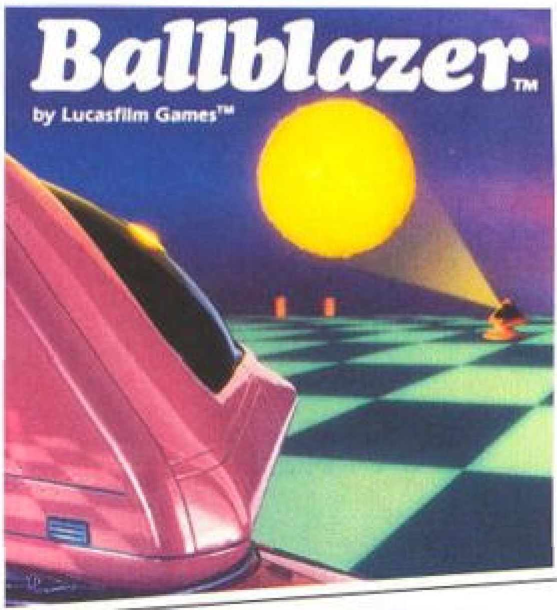
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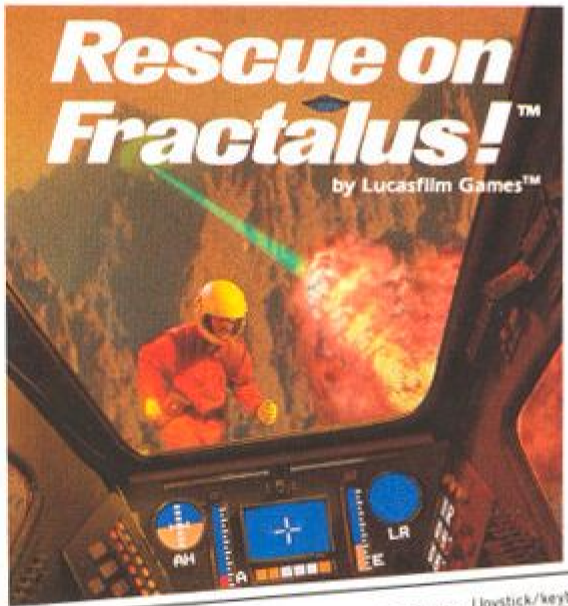
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RESCUE ON FRACTALUS – ROM – £14.99 (Joystick/keyboard optional)
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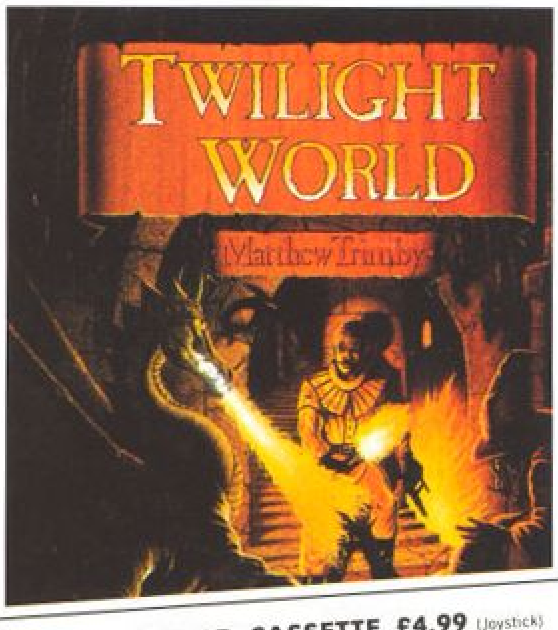
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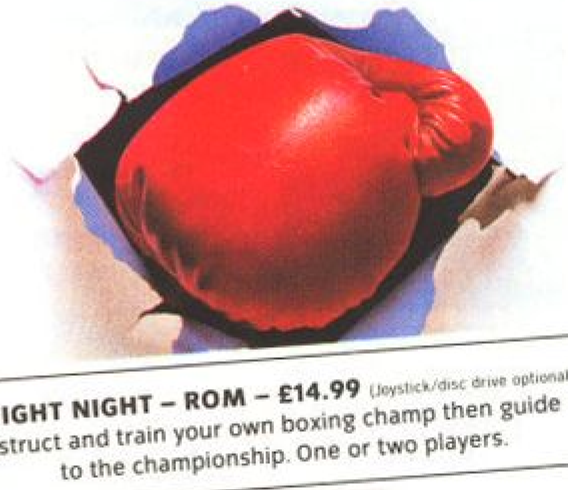

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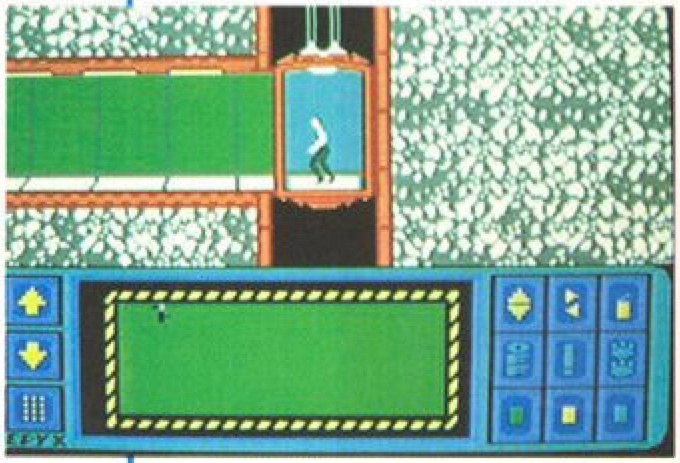
ACE

AMERICAN ISSUE

24 Cover Cassette – *Impossible Mission*

Full loading instructions for our **fabulous** four-computer **free cassette** of the all-time classic Epyx game.



28 Inventing the future

The American Revolution started in Boston; now another revolution's under way as the **boffins** of the **Media Lab** explore the possibilities of computer-to-human interaction.

32 Console Crazy

4.5 million Nintendo owners can't be wrong; we check out the stateside console scene.

34 Simulation Success...

Spectrum Holobyte's **brilliant** *Falcon* has won just about **every award** the Software Publishers' Association had to give away. We visited their San Francisco lair to see what other goodies they're cooking up.

36 CD Interactive – the future of games?

We've heard a lot of talk, but what is **CDI** all about? Research & Development teams from **Electronic Arts**, **Activision** and **Lucasfilms** show us what it might look like and predict the future.

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82 The Third Dimension

No 3D specs needed! ACE takes you **right into** the screen, to explore **the best** in **isometric 3D** games, including such gems as *Batman* and *Knight Lore*.

78 The Creation

Adventure creators have been around for some time. We look at their background and future, and investigate Incentive's *ST Adventure Creator*. Is *STAC* the **best** of the bunch?

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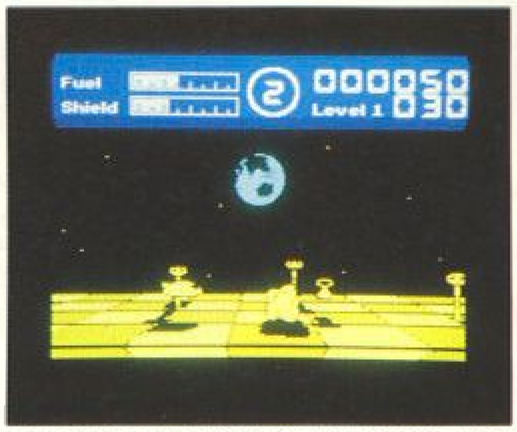
7 News

Dragon's Lair on your ST? We investigate Microdeal's **interactive laser disk** system. FTL interviewed in San Diego...**exclusive** interaction with the team that brought you *Dungeon Master* and *Oids*.

21 Previews

Hot stuff coming your way **real soon** now.



Moon dust or gold dust? Pete Cooke's *Earthlight*, entering the atmosphere soon.

93 Letters

Would you **believe** it? – they're **still** writing in about the great Piracy controversy – this one will **run** and **run**

124 The Blitter End

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43 Screen Test

Staggering stuff this month in the **zippiest**, most **authoritative** games review section around. Get a load of the latest Archie game *Conqueror* and Rainbirds's **stunning** *Carrier Command*.

***Carrier Command* - deep strategy, blasting action**

***Conqueror* - tanking good stuff on the Archie**

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We review *Blasteroids*, son of *Asteroids*, yet another **old-timer** attempting a 1980s **comeback**.

69 Updates Special

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86 Play By Mail

Reviews of *Speculate* and *Crisis*, plus **latest news** from the world of PBM.

70 Tricks 'n' Tactics

Dungeon Master – the **complete players' guide**, including map of the hall of Champions, a list of extremely useful spells, and a map of the first level. Plus our usual **plethora** of pokes for the games that need a little attitude adjustment.

BUY LINES

19 Competition

Oh la la! Wine, dine, **have a good time** if you win a weekend for two in **PARIS**, courtesy of Ere International. And 20 runners up get their pick of some ace software.

87 Subscriptions

A **superb** Spectravideo joystick worth £14.99 – yours **for nowt** when you subscribe to ACE.

88 Special Offers

You want a **bargain**? Then get a load of this – brilliant games at **up to £4 off** in the ACE special offers.

75 Amazing new mag – amazing offer!

Read all about a **brilliant** new concept in magazines for ST and Amiga owners – and about a **special** introductory offer for ACE readers.

PINK PAGES

99 Buyer's Guide

Exhaustive reviews and ratings of the leading **16-bit** computers vying for your cash. Don't buy before you read these pages! Plus details of the **best** in software for your machine.

116 Random Access

The **mind-boggling** ACE puzzle, the **cryptic** ACE crossword; don't just sit there – think about something. And, of course, we're offering those tempting **prizes**...

119 Readers' Pages

This is the meaning of **interactive entertainment** – and it's all your own work – the small-ads, the adventure contacts, the user group ads, the software and hardware for sale.

THE ACE CARD

Win an Amiga!

Turn to page 12 for details of your chance to win an amazing Amiga – and a positive avalanche of software!

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Alastair Cooke eat your heart out – this is the only Letter from America that counts. This month's ACE is a special American issue, bringing you on-the-spot reports from the US computer entertainment scene. You see, we've actually been there on your behalf.

We've visited as many of the hot software houses as we could cram into the two weeks available. We've brought you back a report that we think will open your eyes to what's going on stateside, and point you to where computer entertainment could be in a few years' time.

We've got such goodies as an exclusive interview with the creators of last month's mega-game ***Dungeon Master***; a report on the buzzing console scene (those Yanks are nutty for Nintendos); news and pictures from Boston's Media Lab, where they're busy inventing the future; a sneak peek at Electronic Arts' Compact Disc Interactive demo; pictures of Spectrum Holobytes's latest simulation – of a PT 109 torpedo boat; and a report on ***Air Warrior***, the multi-user modem game that's taking the States by storm.

Because we've got all these very special reports, you'll find a couple of regulars missing from this issue; both our Graphics and Music pages have had to take a rest. But don't worry – especially if you're a graphics fan; we've brought back plenty of exciting visual stuff from the U.S.A.. And both Music and Graphics will be back with a vengeance next month.

Last, but by no means least, part of our all-American package is the cassete on the cover – free, gratis and for nothing you get one of the all-time classic games, Epyx's ***Impossible Mission***. If you've never played it, just buy this mag and take it home to sample one of the richest experiences of the past few gameplaying years; and if you're 16-bit owner, don't worry – we've got a great disk offer for you.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS Avon Direct Mail, PO Box 1, Portishead, Bristol BF20 9EG. 0272 842487 • **SPECIAL OFFERS** (Christine Stacey) **The Old Barn, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 7PY,** 0458 74011 • **COLOUR ORIGINATION** Wessex Reproduction, 325a Wells Road, Bristol BS4 0QL • **DISTRIBUTION** SM Distribution, 16/18 Trinity Gardens, London SW9 8DX, 01-274 8611/5 • **PRINTING** Chase Web Offset, Plymouth • © **FUTURE PUBLISHING LTD 1988** • No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without our permission.

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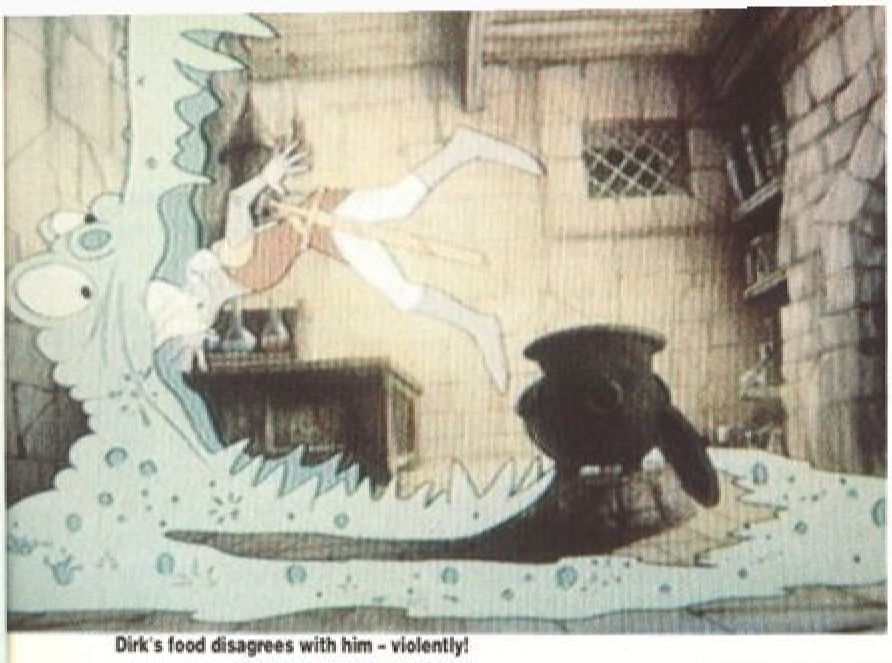


Dirk's food disagrees with him – violently!

INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAKES OFF ?

Remember the old *Dragon's Lair* laserdisc coin-op? Microdeal certainly do: they've just released *Journey Into The Lair*, an interactive video package from the States that brings all that dashing cinema-style animation right into your home.

At a fraction under £100 it's not cheap, but as the UK's first ever home interactive video game it'll really put you one step ahead of the Joneses. The *Journey* software runs on an ST, but the game's action sequences are all provided by the original *Dragon's Lair* laserdisc. You'll need a suitable laserdisc player to run this on, a cable to connect it to the ST – Microdeal will sell you one for a stiff £20 – and the *Journey* package itself.

Seems a bit steep for a game to show off with? Well, bear in mind that the whole set-up of ST, cable, package and player will probably cost rather less than *Zarch* and an Archimedes to run it on – the techno-poseur's current best bet. Even if you've got the right sort of laserdisc player, an ST and a cable you still might shy away from shelling out £100 for the game if you're just after entertainment. All the same, as a taste of what CD-ROM games could offer within the next few years it's interesting stuff indeed.

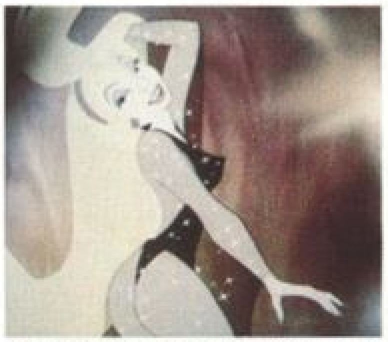
The Game

The *Dragon's Lair* laserdisc is packed with short action sequences which string together to form the game's main plotline, plus numerous unpleasant ways of dying if you should deviate from the plot. The controlling software freezes the laserdisc action at crucial decision points, and offers you a range of possible commands on the ST screen. Use the mouse to select the one that looks most promising, and then sit back to watch the results. The hero of the piece, Dirk Daring, will then either perish horribly or advance a little further in his quest to rescue the beautiful Daphne.

You can choose how complex you want the game decisions to be, but the process is still a matter of trial and error. To make matters worse, the software itself seems to be bugged in places and the instructions are woefully inadequate. The game only runs from a medium-res desktop, and at times the pointer will inexplicably disappear, making it impossible to select commands properly.

Hey, Goodlookin'!

The striking thing about the game is the way that, despite these problems and the very limited options open to you – do the right thing or die is pretty much the order of the day – the thing still manages to be both compelling and exciting. Often the right choice is simply a matter of guesswork, there being no logical reason why one tactic should fail and another succeed. You can learn what to do – though crucial sequences can be mirrored to make this process harder – but this would hardly pass as gameplay under normal circumstances. So why doesn't it fall flat on its face here?



Here's the beautiful Daphne, but can you rescue her?

Clearly the answer lies in the amazing graphics provided by the laserdisc system, but it's not just a question of colour range or resolution. What does the trick is the style, humour and pace of the game's animation: this is remarkable stuff indeed, and points out just how far computers still have to go before they're anywhere near modern cinema standards. ●

£400 OF SOFTWARE – ST FREE?

The price of an ST is supposed to have gone up by £100, to £399 – but it still seems that you can get one, without too much trouble, at the old price.

Mark Holman of Sussex dealers CBS Computers told ACE that 'our suppliers are still able to get them at the old price', and that people 'aren't exactly queueing up to buy them at £299'. He reckons that when the price rise does come into effect 'it will give Amiga sales a real boost, since the price will be so much nearer.'

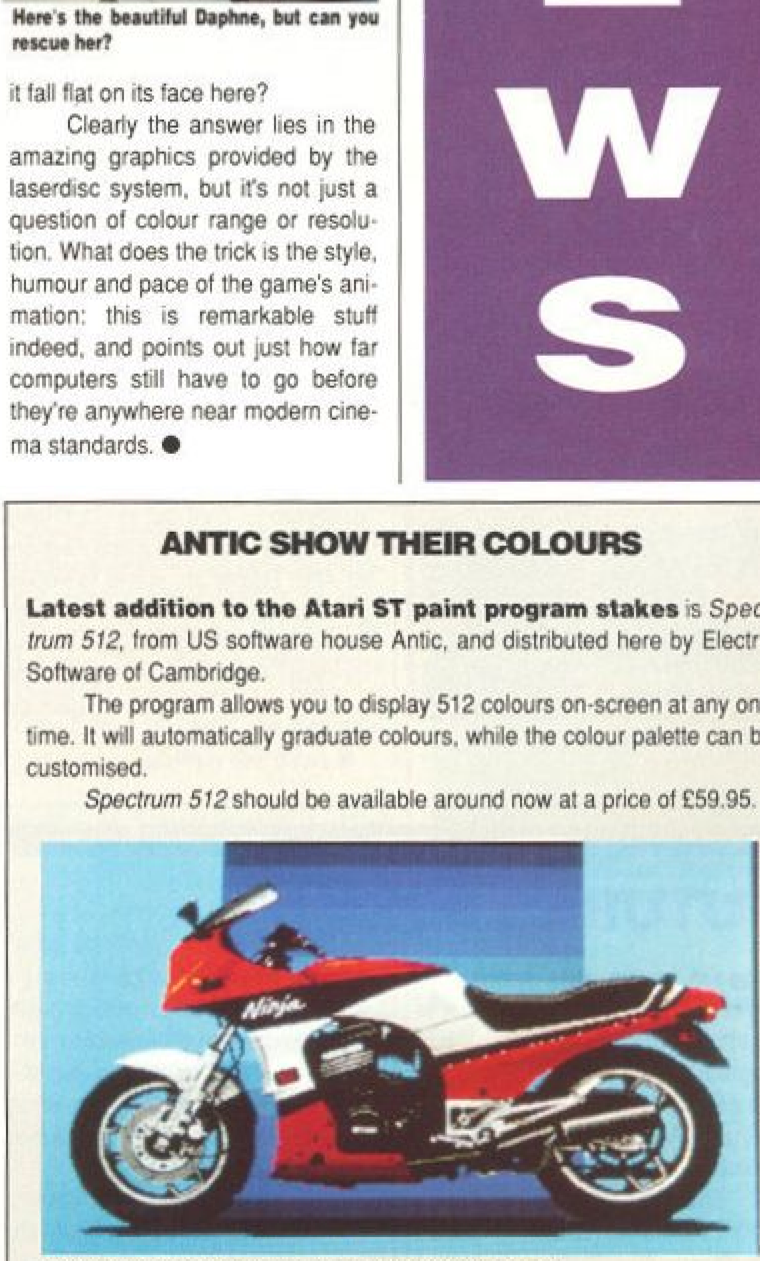
To make the ST a more attractive proposition when the price does go up, Atari are lining up a new software bundle for the machine – on the 520 this should mean something approaching £400 worth of games. Titles have yet to be finalised, but Atari are known to have considered *Tetris* and *Defender of The Crown* for inclusion.

ANTIC SHOW THEIR COLOURS

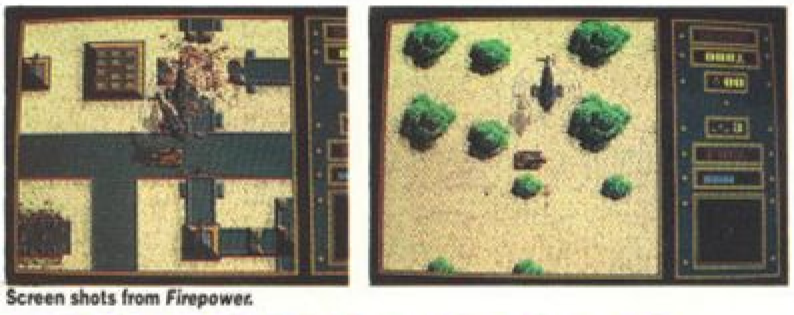
Latest addition to the Atari ST paint program stakes is *Spectrum 512*, from US software house Antic, and distributed here by Electric Software of Cambridge.

The program allows you to display 512 colours on-screen at any one time. It will automatically graduate colours, while the colour palette can be customised.

Spectrum 512 should be available around now at a price of £59.95.

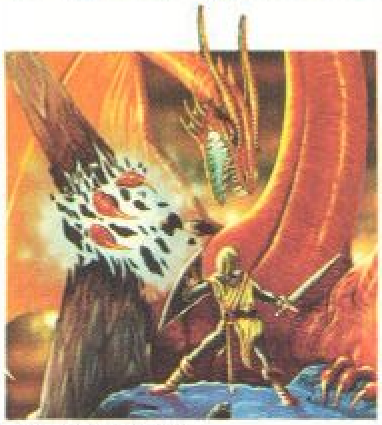


Painted on the ST in Spectrum 512. But how long did it take?

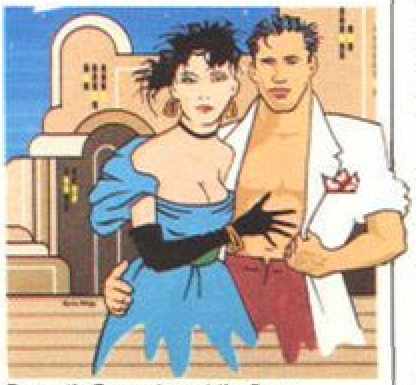


Screen shots from *Firepower.*

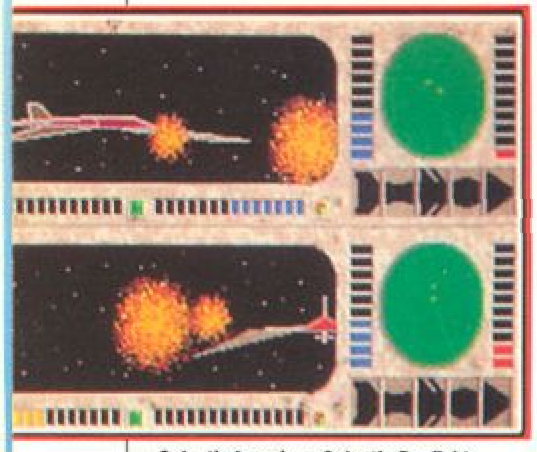
MICROILLUSIONS FOR ACTIVISION



Faery Tale Adventure.



Romantic Encounters at the Dome.



Galactic Invasion - Galactic Dogfight

Fans of *The Faery Tale Adventure,* one of the largest and most successful of Amiga games, will be glad to hear that Activision have signed a two-year agreement for UK distribution with Microillusions.

This means that not only will Microillusions' games be easier to obtain, but that they will be substantially cheaper than hitherto.

While Microillusions have made a name for themselves largely on the strength of their Amiga software, they are now planning to convert more titles to PC and C64 formats.

Future releases will include Amiga paint program *Photon Paint*, arcade games *Firepower* and *Galactic Invasion* and the card game *Blackjack Academy*.

Most intriguing, though, is *Romantic Encounters at the Dome*, which Activision are touting as a 'true life adult encounter for men and women'. Most Microillusions titles will cost either £19.99 or £29.99, but a price for *Photon Paint* has yet to be fixed.

Activision's signing of a 16-bit software house does not mean they are abandoning the road of arcade conversions. Due out in September is *R-Type*, while the micro versions of *After Burner* are slated to appear at Christmas. A bullish Amanda Barry, Activision spokesperson, told us that '*After Burner* will be the number one game this Christmas'. We shall see, Amanda. ●

FUTURE'S FORMAT

Biggest news this month for owners of 16-bit machines has got to be the launch of a new monthly disk magazine from Future Publishing (also publishers of your own, your very own Advanced Computer Entertainment).

Each month the free cover disk will be stuffed full of utilities, games and demos. Ben Taylor, co-editor of ST/Amiga Format told ACE that the new magazine would be covering a broad range of topics including personal productivity, programming, technological developments, music and graphics. He added that there would be a strong emphasis on the American scene.

For more details of ST/Amiga Format – and how ACE readers can get preferential treatment on that cover disk – turn to page 75. ●

SHOOTING FROM THE LIP...

If you read our news story in Issue 3 about the Lipstik Plus, a 'voice activated control headset' designed in America and distributed over here by U.S. Gold, you'll be pleased to hear that we at the ACE offices have just got our hands on one of the bizarre contraptions. The thinking behind the widget is that it enables the player to shout into a small mouthpiece on the the headset, and so emulate the fire button being pressed on the joystick – you shout 'fire' and the computer responds and operates the weapon for you. The manufactures reckon the Lipstick works with 95 percent of software that uses a joystick fire button – we tested this with Elite's *Ikari Warriors*, and sure enough the thing seemed to work, though lobbing grenades was a little tricky. At the time of writing U.S.Gold were still undecided as to how they were going to market the product, and at what price. But by the time you read this all that will have been sorted out and very shortly games-players countrywide will be able to really let the aliens know what they think of them. ●

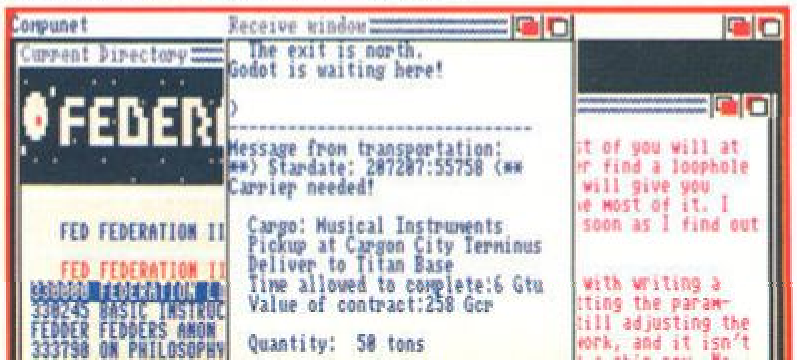
SHOOTING FROM THE HIP...

Another creative use for home computers has been found by a Liverpool-based company called Gamesware. They are currently marketing a game called *Gamma Strike* which retails at about the £23 mark for C64, Spectrum and Amstrad, and comes in a large box complete with two air-powered plastic pistols, some small soft plastic pellets and a target mounted on a touch-sensitive board that plugs directly into your computer – plus, of course, the necessary software. The idea is for one to four players to take turns shooting at the target – your scores are then displayed on your monitor. With three types of game including an 'Alien Shootout' where you try to out-draw a bunch of aliens, *Gamma Strike* is a novel product aimed at the younger player who'll probably get quite a lot of satisfaction from it – as long as an adult supervises and ensures the pistols are used safely. ●

FEDERATION 2

Is the title of the latest multi-user game on Compunet, now serving ST and Amiga owners, as well as C64 users. It's a trading game in which your aim is to 'amass enough money and power to become Emperor'. Compunet claim that the game is 'dramatically different from traditional multi-user games'. According to the game's author, Alan Lenton, this difference is because 'in most MUGs you trundle around collecting and dumping treasure – in *Federation* you're actually trading.' It will cost you around £1.50 per hour (on top of Compunet subs) to find out just how different the difference is. ●

Your comms unit flashes up news of a trading contract.



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  The exit is north.
Godot is waiting here!

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Message from transportation:
**) Stardate: 207207:55758 (**
Carrier needed!

  Cargo: Musical Instruments
  Pickup at Cargon City Terminus
  Deliver to Titan Base
  Time allowed to complete:6 Gtu
  Value of contract:258 Gcr

  Quantity:  50 tons
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330000 FEDERATION II
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The FTL team assembled outside Software Heav[illegible] outside San Diego, California. Wayne Holder is second from left, Russ Boelhauf extreme right.

ACE ON THE ROAD IN SOFTWARE HEAVEN

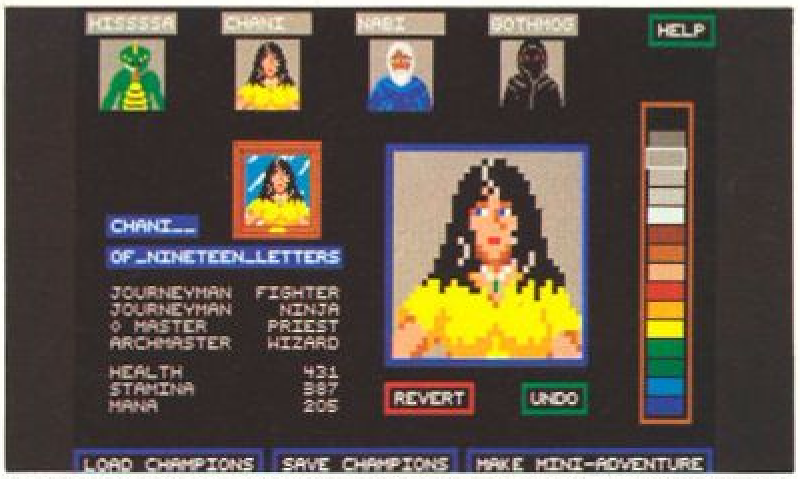
Last month we raved over two games distributed here by Mirrorsoft – *Dungeon Master* and *Oids*. This month we've wandered over to San Diego on America's Californian coast to speak to the people who are responsible for both of those masterpieces – FTL, or Faster Than Light.

Funnily enough, the name you actually see over the door when you approach the FTL offices is Software Heaven; a bit of a risk, you might think, but not many people who've played *Dungeon Master* or *Oids* would be inclined to disagree. At the moment FTL are not just Faster Than Light – they're Hotter Than Anyone.

The brains behind FTL is Wayne Holder, a man whose first commercial venture in software – in the very early 80s – was a spell checker. Indeed, they still update their existing word programs, due to the constant demand. If you've ever used Microsoft Spell, you now know who to thank.

FTL's first games was *Sundog*, released in '84 for the Apple II to a good critical reception but unimpressive sales. The main impetus behind the company came from the unveiling of the Atari ST at the Jan '85 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas; Holder decided to have another crack at games, spurred on by a desire to do something with the ST's graphics, speed and sound. *Sundog* was duly converted, but it was after that FTL switched to a new games design system, based on the C language, that Holder describes as 'our lego set'.

That lego set had a demo of *Dungeon Master* on show at the CES in January 1986, and Holder was promising delivery for Christmas of the same year... He says that the company took 'a lot of flak' over the late delivery, but that as a result *DM* became 'possibly the most anticipated product there's ever been'. ●



```
CHANI___
OF_NINETEEN_LETTERS

JOURNEYMAN  FIGHTER
JOURNEYMAN    NINJA
0 MASTER     PRIEST
ARCHMASTER   WIZARD

HEALTH          431
STAMINA         387
MANA            205
```

Dungeon Master **character editor screen – alter your character's physiognomy, pixel by pixel.**

DUNGEON MASTER

'Why the long delay? Wayne Holder is at pains to point out the importance of a development system to FTL: 'developing the system took the time, not the development of the game itself'. Why dungeons? *Swords and Sorcery* was the original idea, and Holder thought the genre a way of fulfilling his 'desire to convert people to computer games and we decided our first target would be the D&D people.' However, he says their development system 'is NOT an RPG system – it's a real-time graphics adventure system.' Andy Jaus, Doug Bell and Mike Newton – the team responsible for *DM* – are now working on a mini-sequel for *DM* which you will be able to add onto and play from the original; it could be the first of many additional disks that will make your original game go further. But FTL are even more excited about the *DM* Character Editor; with this you'll be able to extract characters from a previous game, redraw them if you wish, and then drop them into a completely new game. ●

OIDS

Wayne Holder explains the genesis of the game: 'Dan Hewitt walked in one day – he was a friend of a friend of a friend – with a great version of *Xevious* for the Apple II. I couldn't sell this game, because of the rights problems. I thought 'I'd like to have you', so I took him on, showed him an Atari and he spent three to four months learning C. Dan's an arcade game fanatic and *Oids* evolved from discussions we had. But everything is his work.' While here in the UK everyone is reminded of *Thrust*, at FTL they deny any influence. As Russ Boelhauf, FTL's marketing manager, says; 'No-one around here had even seen it.'

Dan Hewitt, author of *Oids*, beams at ACE's lensman.

The bad news for Amiga owners is that FTL aren't sure of an *Oids* for that machine; the good news for Mac owners (both of you) is that Dan Hewitt is beavering away on a version for Apple's flagship right now. ●

COCOONING

Russ Boelhauf and Wayne Holder have some interesting ideas on the future of computer entertainment in the U.S.A., not least of which is that the phenomenon known as 'cocooning' is beginning to make computer games an acceptable form of home entertainment for the over 25s. Whereas a few years ago everyone was out windsurfing and driving fast cars, the yuppies now have kids and are forced to spend more time at home – which is what cocooning is. So they're looking for new ways to spend that time. Russ believes that 'games now have a certain acceptability to what five or 10 years ago was a BAD way to spend time.' The evidence is there in the increasing popularity of flight sims, which Russ describes as 'adult fantasy'.

In American terms this means more Mac and PC software. As for the Amiga and ST, Wayne Holder sees those moving much more towards the status of straightforward games machines. And CDI? They think it will provide a tremendous system for *Dungeon Master*, but they're biding their time. ●

OBLITERATOR

OBLITERATOR

You are Drak the Last of the Obliterators, a genetically enhanced and awesome fighting machine, bio-engineered for the execution of incredible tasks, the ultimate solution to the most cataclysmic of predicaments.

In the voids of Federation space an alien cruiser has materialised. It is a ship of sinister and foreboding power. Federation defences have been smashed. Earth lies exposed, there is only one hope and you are it!

Summoned by the Federation council, your assignment is to use a prototype matter transporter to infiltrate the alien cruiser. Armed with a particle beam disrupter, lasers and whatever the alien habitat can provide, you must cripple the alien vessel thus enabling its destruction.

OBLITERATOR — £24.95

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Snippets...

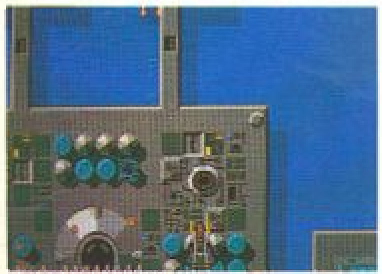
Up and coming titles for your micro

SIDEWINDER

Melbourne House

Atari ST	£19.95dk
Amiga	£19.95dk

Here's a stunning looking vertically scrolling shoot-em-up for 16-bit machine owning arcade fans. There's a host of flying aliens and ground installations to bomb and blast as you progress through increasingly difficult levels. Destruction fans look out for it 'real soon now.'



ATARI ST - *Sidewinder.*

SKATE CRAZY

Gremlin

Spectrum	£7.99cs	£12.99dk
Amstrad	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
C64	£9.99cs	£14.99dk

The roller skating simulation with a difference. Your name's Freddy and you're in the middle of a multi-storey car park trying to impress four judges with your 360 degree spins, barrel jumps and backwards skating. The game incorporates Gremlin's new 'Flexiload' system of multi-loading which allows the majority of the code to be loaded at once, but the various scenarios are loaded individually – in whatever order the player chooses. Look out for it soon.

MARAUDER

Hewson

Spectrum	£7.99cs	
C64	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Ams	£9.99cs	£14.99dk

This vertically scrolling shoot-em-up puts you amongst a host of nasty aliens who fire lasers, launch winder missiles and lob Molotov cocktails at you – so make sure your trigger finger is in tip top condition for the onslaught in the near(ish) future.

FOUNDATION'S WASTE

Exocet Software

Atari ST	£24.95dk
Amiga	£24.95dk

Ulp! Your future does not look at all bright. As a captured space pilot it would appear the Federation have some nasty surprises in store for you. It's a good job then that you've managed to pinch one of their spacecraft. All you have to do now is survive the onslaught from the pursuing Federation craft and escape! *Foundation's Waste* should be with us first on the ST with the Amiga version in hot pursuit.

THE SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD

Electronic Arts.

IBM PC	£14.95dk
Amiga	£14.95dk

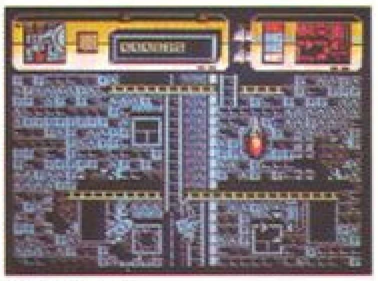
This (almost) budget title has been available for some time as an import, but now the big E.A. are distributing it over here. You set off from Spain seeking fame and fortune by discovering new cities and continents. But watch out for the natives.

ACTION FORCE II

Virgin

Spectrum	£8.95cs	14.95dk

COBRA are holding some politicians hostage and it's up to you to lead the Action Force to the rescue. Should you use your machine gun? or will the Bio gun make shorter work of the enemy? Platform and arcade action over literally thousands of different levels that the computer generates for each game. *Action Force II* should be in the shops as you read this.



Action Force II

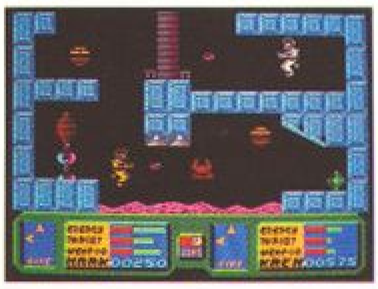
BLOOD BROTHERS

Gremlin

Spectrum	£7.99cs	12.99dk
Amstrad	£9.99cs	14.99dk
C64/128	£9.99cs	14.99dk

Two alien brothers, Hark and Kren, are the stars of this shoot-em-up cum arcade adventure. The boys are trying to recover gems stolen by the hostile Scorpions, who have now stashed the gems on the planet Scorpia.

The lads have jet-bikes fitted with laser bolt weapon units at their disposal and some nippy thrust-packs for use underground.



IN BRIEF

ELITE'S CONSOLE FIRST

Elite claim to be the first British company to produce a game for the US Nintendo market. It will be a version of the ACE-rated *Thundercats.*

SUGAR ON THE BOX?

Alan Sugar media star? The abrasive magnate is to appear in a series of TV adverts by the Department of Trade and Industry telling our entrepreneurs about the 1992 abolition of customs barriers within the EEC. Maybe they'll give him his own series.

UNHAPPY FAMILIES

D.I.V.O.R.C.E.? CRL and EA have yet to decide on terms for a new agreement, and rumours abound that EA are far from happy with the software that affiliate label CRL have been producing. The marriage guidance counsellors are still working on the case...

MANDARIN'S PLUM DEAL

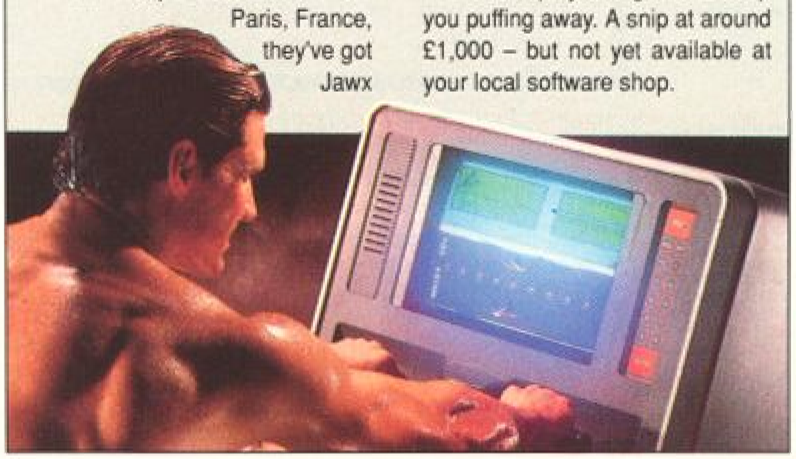
New software house Mandarin have announced two new deals with independent labels. From Paris, France, they've got Jawx International, whose first release will be *STOS*, a 'new concept' in games designers, according to Mandarin's Chris Payne. The other house is Manchester-based Red Rat, whose latest *Screaming Wings* was not terribly well received here at ACE. Their first title for Mandarin will be *RAC Rally* in September; let's hope they've moved up a gear or two.

MASTERTRONIC'S OTHER SIDE

Mastertronic are getting further in to the double-sided act. As well as the £1.99 Spectrum/Amstrad cassette they're now producing the £9.99 PC/C64 disk and – wait for it – a 3.5in PC/Apple 2 disk at the same price. Can we now expect a double-sided Spectrum/QL microdrive cartridge?

ROW, ROW, ROW THE BOAT

While Americans might not be quite as gadget-crazy as the Japanese, they don't lag too far behind. Take, for instance, Life Fitness's *Liferower* trainer, with built-in video display and game to keep you puffing away. A snip at around £1,000 – but not yet available at your local software shop.



BARD'S TALE III

RPG fans will be heartened by the imminent release of the latest in the *Bard's Tale* series. *Bard's Tale III: Thief of Fate* will be available for the C64 real soon now.

The game takes place in the ruined city of Skara Brae – ruined because Mangar's master, Tarjan, has just paid a visit. The object of the game, then, is to asemble a group of adventurers to seek out and destroy Tarjan.

Your party can include both men and women, in up to 13 character classes, who can travel through 84 dungeon levels and 7 dimension. More than 100 magic spells are available to help you take on the game's 500 monsters. *Bard's Tale III* costs £14.95.

THE DECODER PROGRAM

This short program listing will DECODE the 4-letter codes printed below next to the prizes. It turns each code into a five-digit number such as the one printed on your ACE card. All you have to do is type-in the program using the instructions for your computer printed below.

Then RUN the program. It will ask you to input each of the prize codes in turn and will then reveal on screen the winning numbers. If your number comes up, YOU CAN IMMEDIATELY CLAIM YOUR PRIZE!

If you are unable to get the program to work, a list of the winning numbers, correctly decoded, may be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to:
ACE June winners list, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ

C64, CPC, ST, AMIGA version

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 25:INPUT "Code";B$
20 B=0:FOR C=1 TO 4:B=B*26
30 D=ASC(MID$(B$,C,1))
40 IF D>90 THEN D=D-32
50 B=B+D-65:NEXT C:PRINT "Winning Number is";B:NEXT A
```

SPECTRUM version

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 25:INPUT "Code";B$
20 LET B=0:FOR C=1 TO 4:LET B=B*26
30 LET D=CODE B$(C TO)
40 IF D>90 THEN LET D=D-32
50 LET B=B+D-65:NEXT C:PRINT "Winning Number is";B:NEXT A
```

TYPING IN THE PROGRAM

SPECTRUM

48K: Power on, and type the Spectrum listing in as shown, pressing ENTER at the end of each line. To get the word CODE in line 30, hold down caps shift and symbol shift keys together and press the letter I key. When you've typed all five lines in correctly, press R (for RUN) followed by ENTER. Now type in the codes one at a time, pressing ENTER after each one: the program will stop after you've typed in all 25 codes.

128K: Select 128K BASIC mode from the start-up menu and type in the Spectrum listing as shown, hitting ENTER at the end of each line. Type RUN, hit the ENTER key again and type the codes in as for the 48K Spectrum above.

C64/128

Type the listing in as shown, hitting the RETURN key at the end of each line. Type RUN (Don't use the RUN/STOP key), hit RETURN and then type the codes in one after the other.

AMSTRAD CPC

Type the listing in as shown, hitting the RETURN key (6128) or the larger of the two ENTER keys (464 or 664) at the end of each line. Type RUN and hit RETURN or the large ENTER key again - don't use CONTROL and the small ENTER key here - and type the codes in one after the other.

ATARI ST

Put the LANGUAGE disk in the drive and switch the ST on. Double-click first on the drive A icon and then on the BASIC.PRG icon to boot Basic. Type EDIT and press the RETURN key. Now type the listing in, hitting RETURN after each line, and press the F10 key when you've typed all five lines in. Now type RUN, press RETURN again, and type the codes in one at a time.

AMIGA

Switch on, put your 'Workbench' disk into the drive and wait for the desktop to appear. Now put your 'Amiga Extras' disk in the drive, double-click on the EXTRAS icon and then double-click on the AMIGA BASIC icon. Type the listing in as shown, hitting RETURN after each line, and then click on the BASIC (rather than the LISTING) window. Type RUN, hit RETURN and then type the codes in one at a time.

OTHER MACHINES

The 'C64, CPC etc' listing is standard MicroSoft Basic, so it ought to work on most micros. If you can't get it to work on yours, write to us for a list of winners — details of this are printed above.

RULES

1.This promotion is open to everyone with the exception of employees of Future Publishing Ltd and anyone involved in the distribution or retailing of Advanced Computer Entertainment magazine.
2.Ownership of the ACE card is limited to one per household.
3.Each four-letter code printed in the magazine corresponds to a winning 5-digit number on one of the ACE cards.
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5.Claims for prizes must be received by first post on the closing date at the latest. The value of any unclaimed prizes will be carried forward to future issues.
6.If, due to a production error, more than one person claims a single prize, the publishers reserve the right to divide the prize between the claimants.
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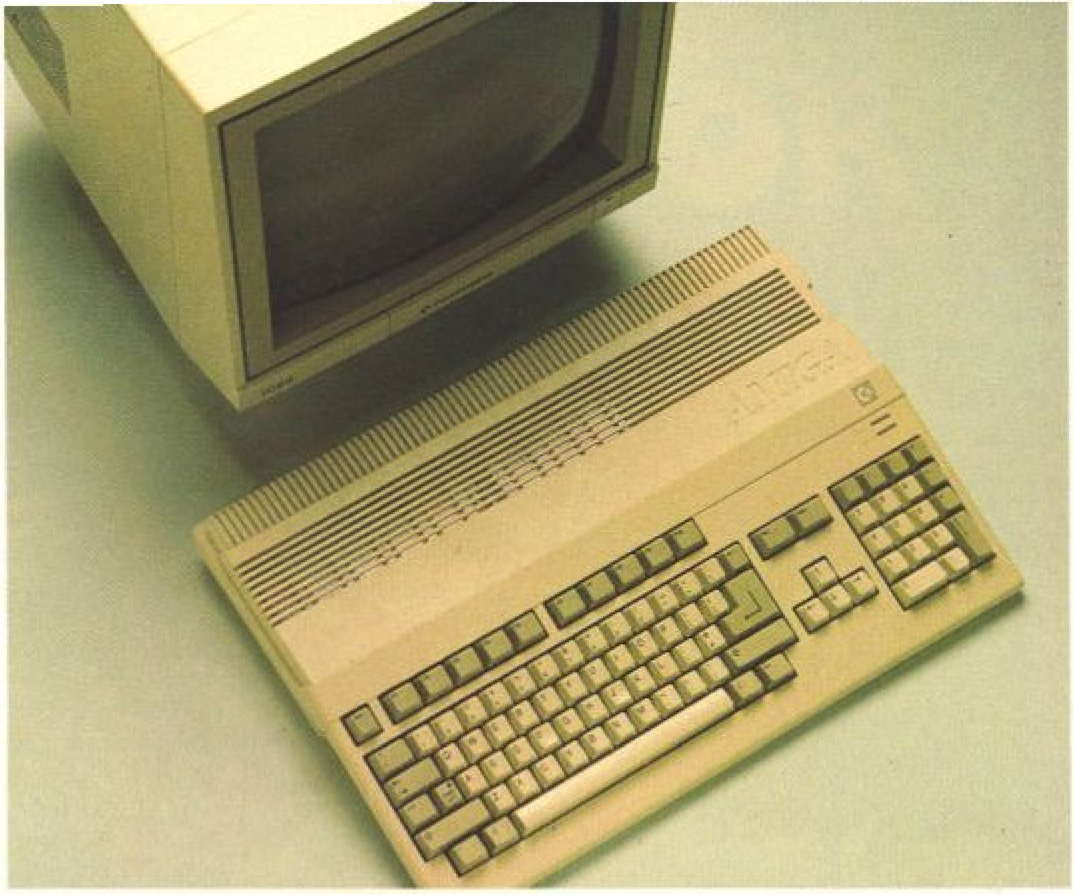


WIN AN AMIGA!

Has your ACE card come up trumps this month? There are 25 great prizes.

For everyone who received a free ACE card on the cover of the April Issue, here's another great opportunity to win prizes.

Using the same program as last time, just type in the 25 new 4-letter codes printed on this page. If the program converts one of them into your personal number, you're a winner!

If you missed the April ACE, you can still get hold of an ACE card – see the box for details.

LOOK AT THESE PRIZES!

ONE 1st PRIZE: *AMIGA 500 + COLOUR MONITOR*
The winning code: DQYI

FOUR 2nd PRIZES: *£50 of software – chosen from the ACE Special Offer pages*
The winning codes: BZHJ • BZOH • CMZC • CSND

TEN 3rd PRIZES: *£25 of software – chosen from the ACE Special Offer pages*
The winning codes: CFBL • AVIK • DFCL • BARG • CQEU • AXRO • EMTK • CRWE • AJDT • ASUU

TEN 4th PRIZES: *A year's free subscription to ACE magazine*
The winning codes: ELFU • BIDC • BEEB • AHFU • AZEG • EMNN • AUVN • CJGH • CLEZ • BEXS

HOW TO OBTAIN AN ACE CARD

If you missed the April issue of ACE, you may obtain an ACE card free of charge by sending us a stamped self-addressed envelope together with a signed statement saying that neither you nor anyone else in your household already owns an ACE card. Apply to:
ACE CARD REQUEST, 4 Queen St, Bath BA1 1EJ
(This offer valid while stocks last).

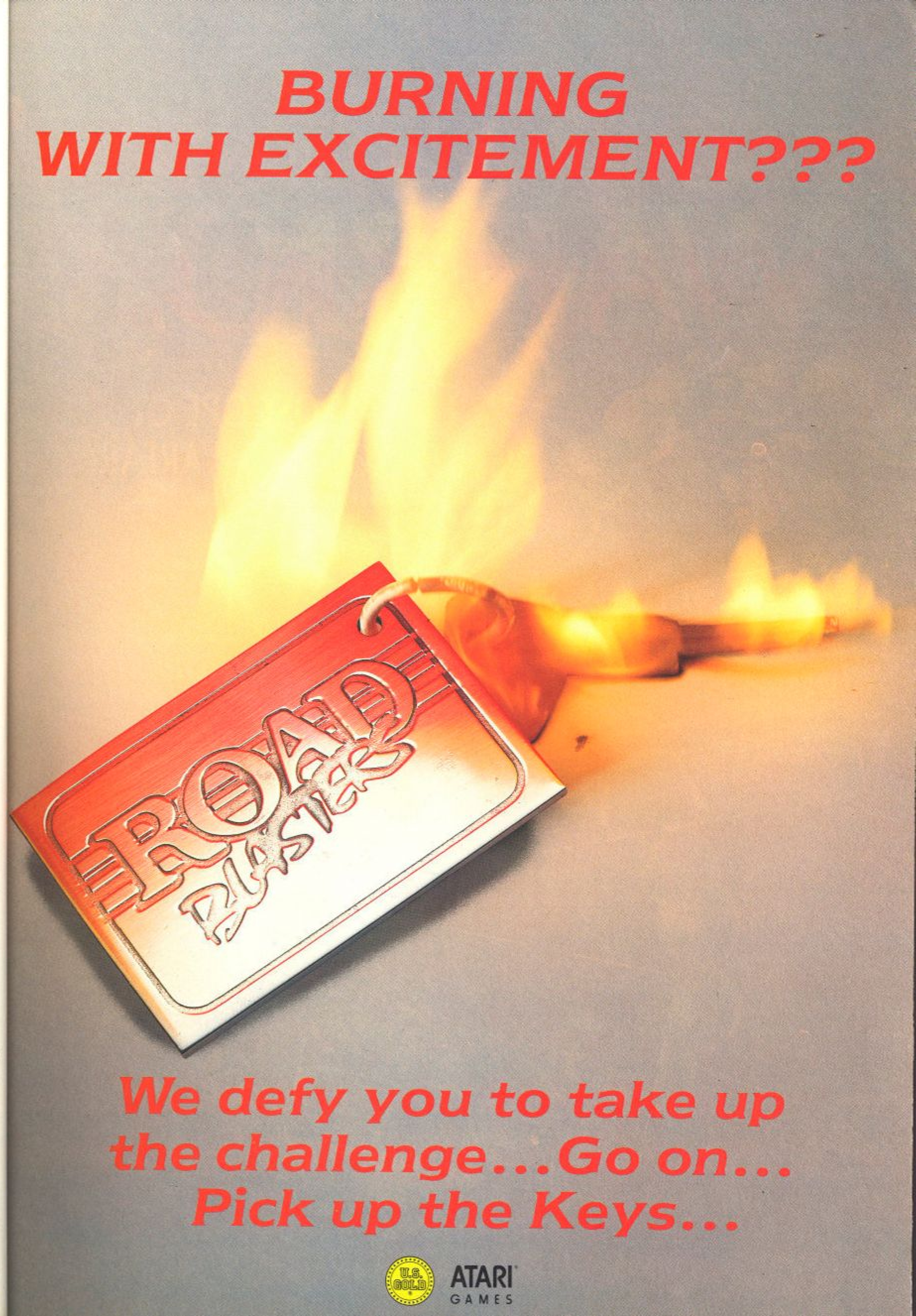
HOW TO CLAIM A PRIZE

If you are one of the winners, you may claim your prize simply by posting us your ACE card together with a note saying which prize you are claiming (and from which issue of ACE).

If your prize is for software, list carefully the software you would like from the selection printed in the ACE Reader Offer pages (88-89).

Assuming your claim is valid, we will forward your prize and return your card within 28 days (probably much sooner).

Post to: ACE CARD PRIZE CLAIM, 4 Queen Street,
Bath BA1 1EJ ***Closing date for claims June 12th, 1988***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ROAD BLASTERS
We defy you to take up
the challenge...Go on...
Pick up the Keys...
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ATARI GAMES

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Combining strategy and depth of gameplay with fast action, DREAM WARRIOR is beyond your wildest dreams ....

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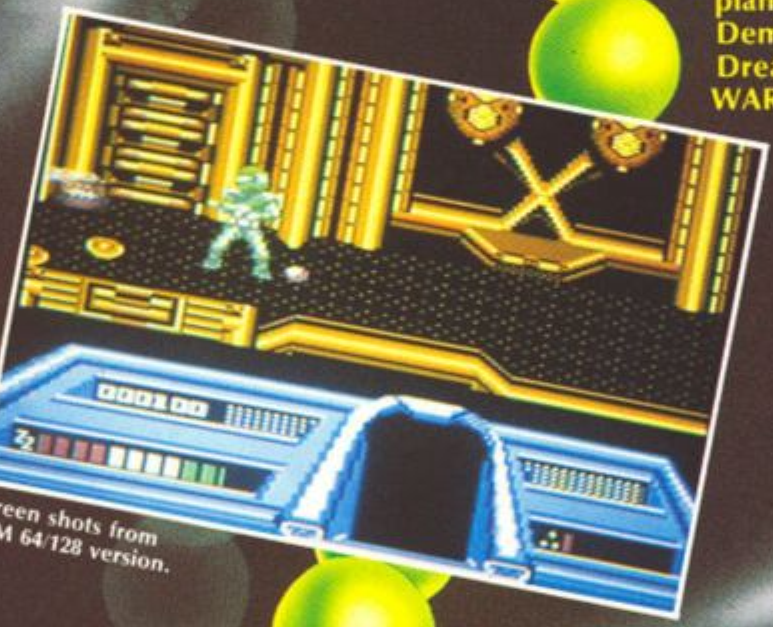
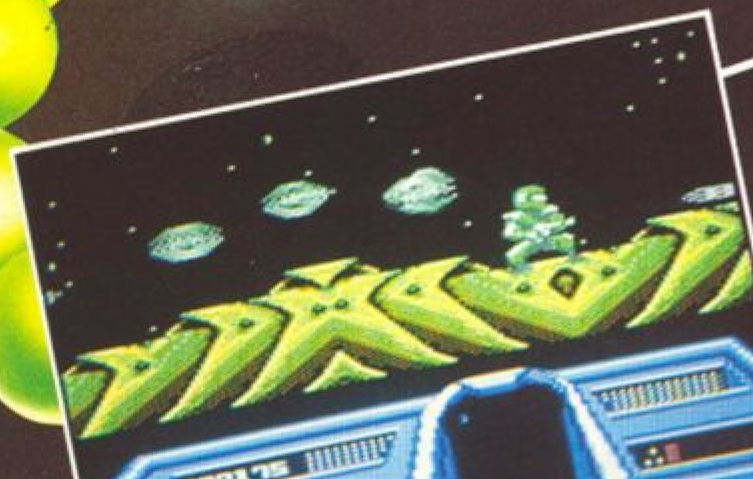
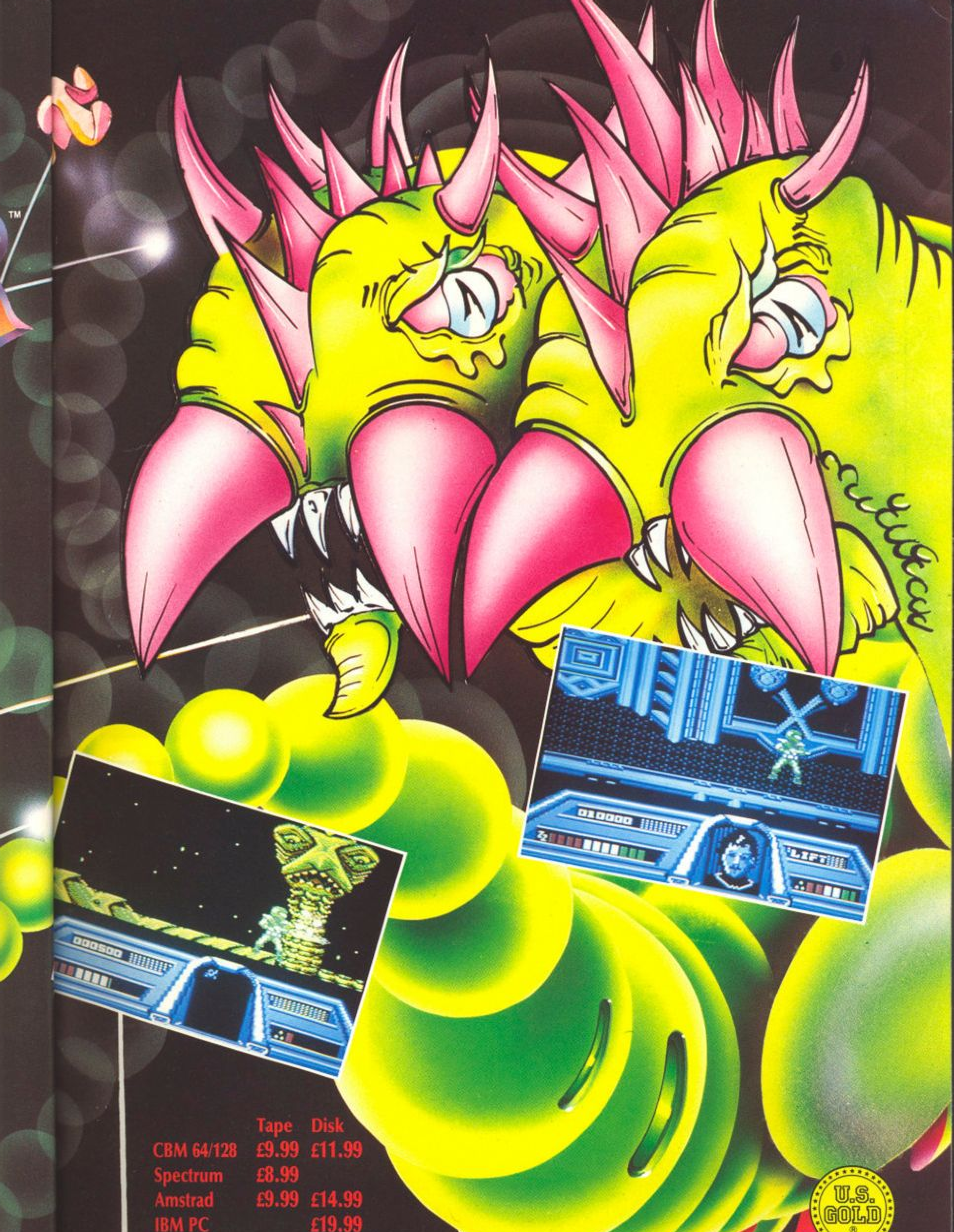


Screen shots from CBM 64/128 version.



Dream Warrior
© 1988 Tarann Ltd.


TM
010000
LIFT
000500

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IBM PC		£19.99

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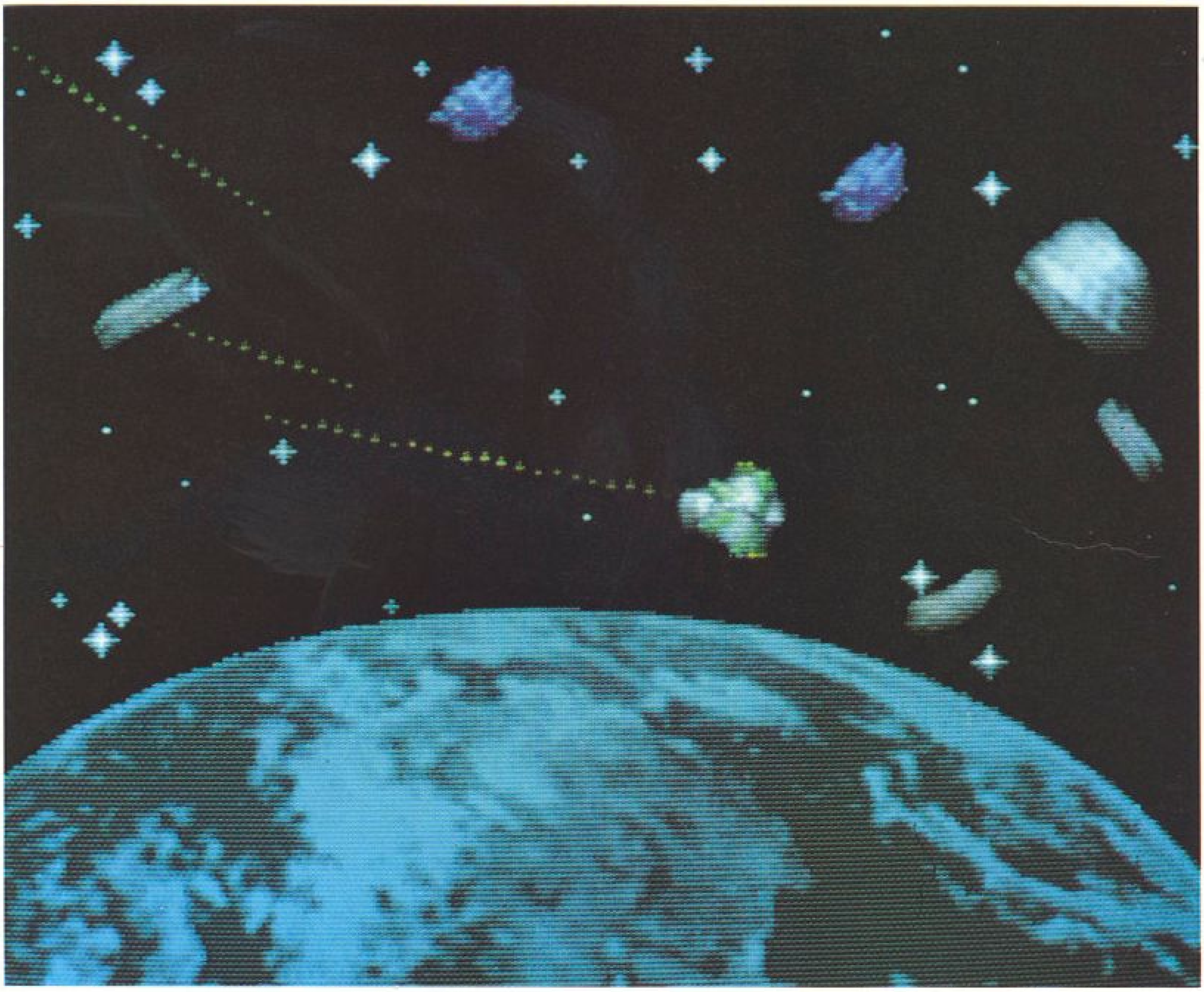
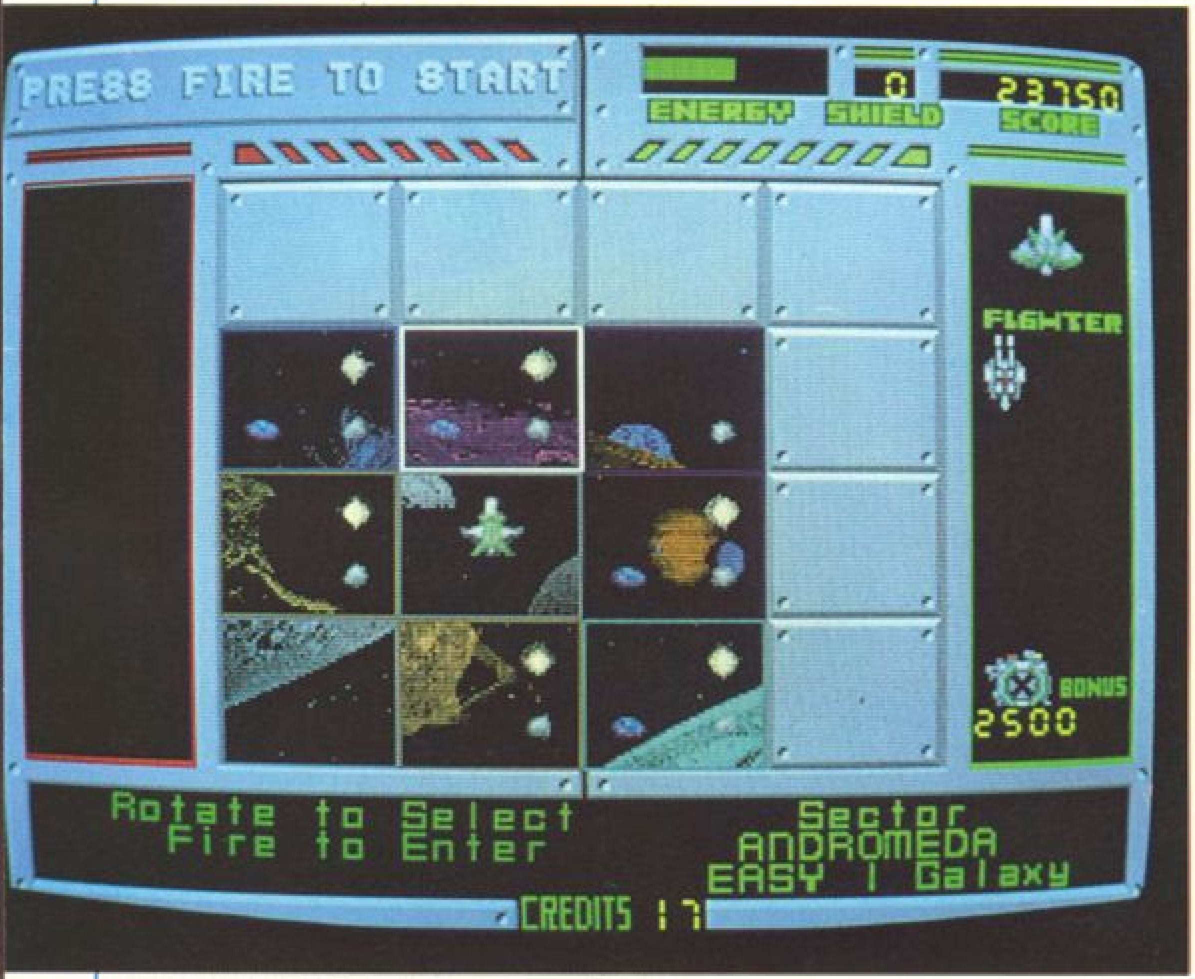
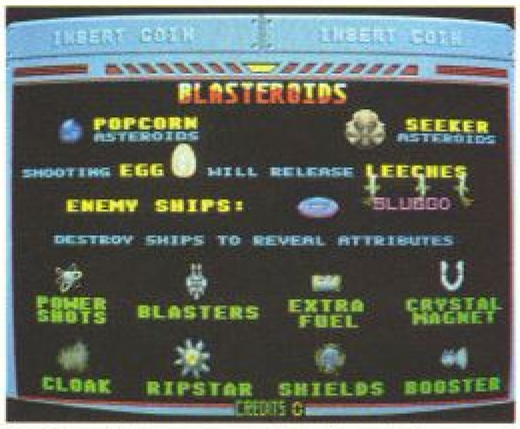



PRESS FIRE TO START
ENERGY
0
SHIELD
23750
SCORE
FIGHTER
BONUS
2500
Sector
ANDROMEDA
EASY I Galaxy
CREDITS 17

Rotate to Select
Fire to Enter

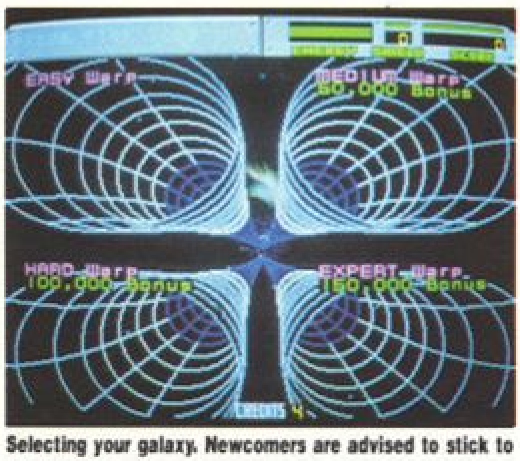
You've cleared seven sectors; only nine more to go in this galaxy.


INSERT COIN
INSERT COIN
BLASTEROIDS
POPCORN
ASTEROIDS
SEEKER
ASTEROIDS
ENEMY SHIPS:
SLUGGO
POWER SHOTS
BLASTERS
EXTRA FUEL
CRYSTAL MAGNET
CLOAK
RIPSTAR
SHIELDS
BOOSTER
CREDITS 0

SHOOTING EGG WILL RELEASE LEECHES

DESTROY SHIPS TO REVEAL ATTRIBUTES

Enemies and bonuses; popcorn's no joke, hanging around and getting in your way. Blasters and shields are the most useful bonuses.


EASY Warp
MEDIUM Warp
50,000 Bonus
HARD Warp
100,000 Bonus
EXPERT Warp
150,000 Bonus
CREDITS 4

Selecting your galaxy. Newcomers are advised to stick to the easy one.

SON OF ASTEROIDS

BLASTEROIDS

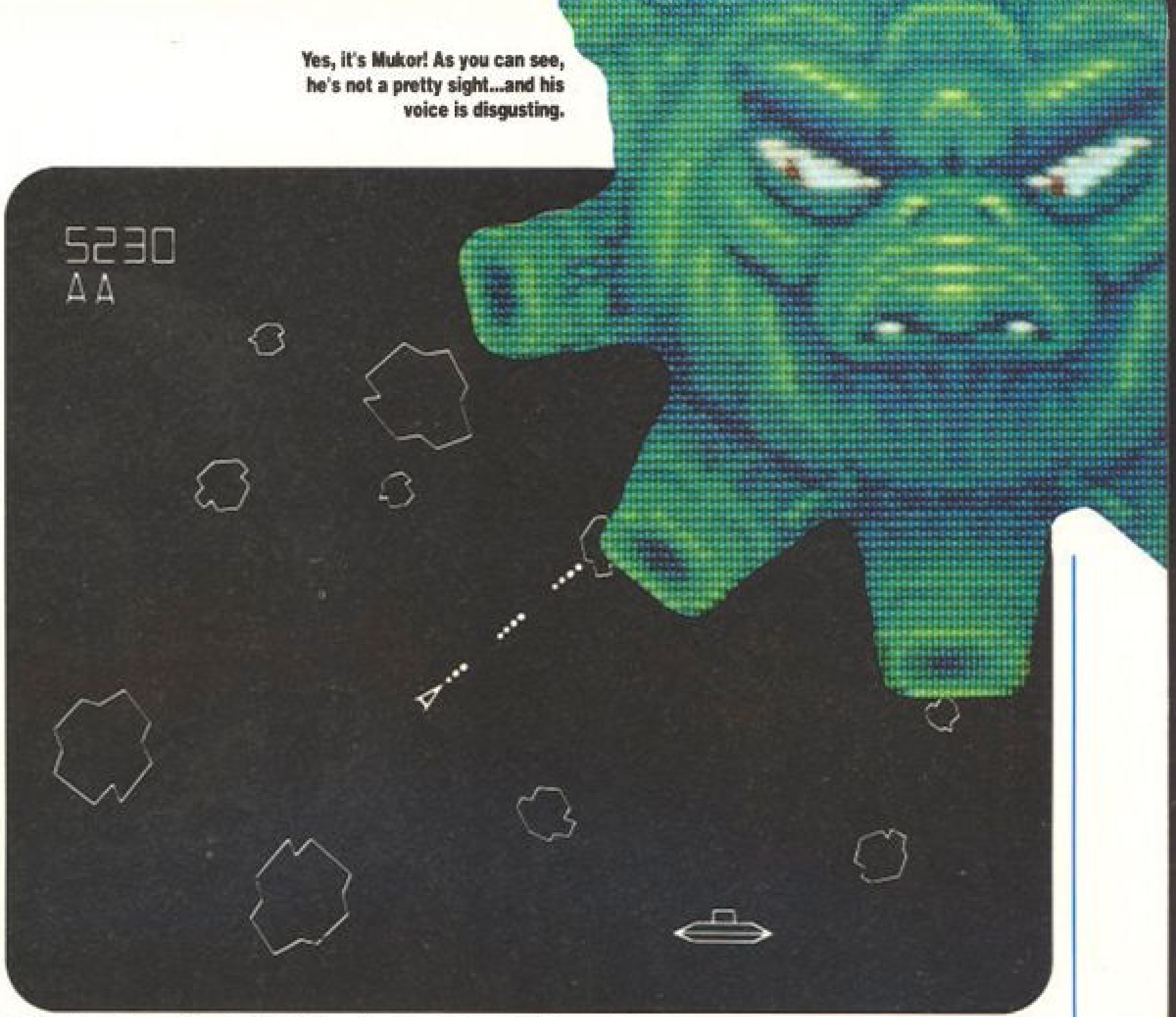
Atari 20p

It had to happen, and the only surprise is that it's taken so long: To *Asteroids*, a son. And, as is the way with evolution, the descendant is stronger, tougher and more complex than the forebear.

The idea of the game is essentially the same as the previous one; rotate and thrust your ship around the screen blasting the asteroids to pieces. When you hit one of the rocks it fragments, so you have to shoot the bits and avoid the ones you can't hit.

The enhancements are largely matters of graphics and sound. *Asteroids* had monochrome vector graphics; *Blasteroids* revels in its rich, digitised backgrounds and 3D objects. It has also has some really funky heroic music and suitable blasting and exploding noises.

And speech – which is where Mukor comes in. This great, green head is the evil source of all your trouble. If you succeed in clearing a sector of the game's large galaxy, Mukor appears for a little sub-game, in which you're supposed to destroy him by shooting up the many elephantine trunks which hang off his ugly mug. As he dodges around the screen he utters such snappy one-liners as 'Mmm, Earth slime is so sweet...' Definitely not a nice man.



Yes, it's Mukor! As you can see, he's not a pretty sight...and his voice is disgusting.

Asteroids - daddy of Blasteroids. Still worth a game if you can find a machine.

As you make progress the game gets distinctly tougher – but the bonuses get juicier. So while the Popcorn asteroids, for instance, will annoy you as they expand and then just stand in your way, you will also get more chances to increase your firepower or get extra shields and fuel. On higher levels, the screen can get very crowded indeed, and progress is a matter of a lot of coins.

Blasteroids is a nice attempt at doing something new with a classic game; they've jazzed it up as much as seems possible and it will certainly be of interest to those who enjoyed *Asteroids* in the distant past. But somehow it doesn't quite have the magic of that earlier game.

● In comparison with its offspring, Asteroids looks positively prehistoric; no colours, no 3D or – although you can't actually see this bit – no speech. But in its day it rivalled such masters as Space Invaders and Defender for originality and addictiveness – and remember that we're talking about the times when people mugged their grannies to raise the coins for a trip down to the arcades.

OPERATION WOLF

When one single arcade has seven machines all playing the same game, then you can bet your boots it's one of the more popular coin-ops around. It was certainly a difficult job to get on one of the *Operation Wolf* machines in the arcade in central London your humble correspondant entered.

Once you play it's pretty easy to see why it's busy; it's one of those games that's utterly addictive at the same time as giving you qualms about playing it at all. Basically, Brian, it's violence.

The cabinet should give you a shrewd idea of what it's about. It's almost a conventional stand-up job – except that the monitor screen is about four feet away fron the player and there's a machine gun mounted on the proejcting part nearest you.

The game you play when you pay the first of many a 20p is a sideways-scrolling shoot-em-up in which your mission (and once you've paid your money you have no choice but to accept it) is to rescue hostages from the concentration camps where the nasties have put them. To this end you loose off round after round at the baddies at who appear in the background, middleground and foreground. In short, the evil men are everywhere. You can blast off grenades at the tanks and boats, and get extra ammo by shooting the clips and bombs you see lying around. But even if you're armed to the teeth, staying alive isn't easy; the enemy are so numerous that it's hard not to take a lot of hits. When that happens the screen starts to fade and the message comes up in quaint, coin-op style Japlish (or is it Engjap?) 'A few physical strength left', and it's game over and off to the concentration camp for you.

Operation Wolf is successful because of its combination of fast and well-animated action with the very realistic simulation of the machine gun you fire. Yes, it's successful because it's one of the most exciting and realistic simulations of violence you will have played. It may make you worry in your more reflective moments (if you have any of those), but while you're playing the only thing on your mind will be the enemy body-count.

PLATOON
The first casualty of war is innocence.
SPECIAL PACK
ORIGINAL MOTOWN RECORDING OF 'TRACKS OF MY TEARS' BY SMOKEY ROBINSON
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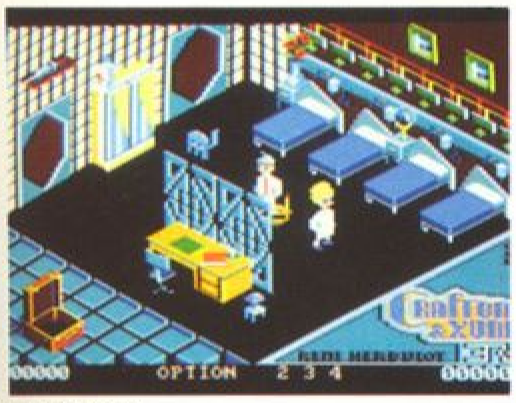
OH LA LA!

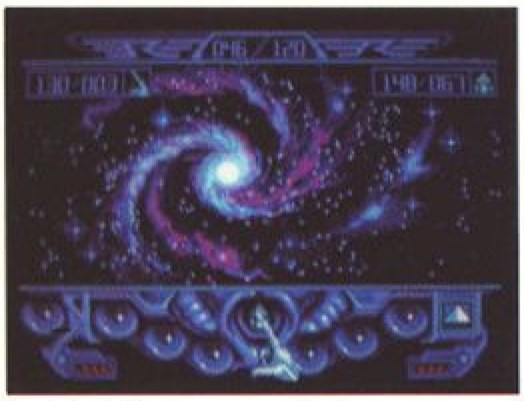
Check out the review of *Spidertronic* in this issue and you'll see why Ere International are the hottest games programming house in France. They've had a string of great releases over the years, beginning with *Get Dexter*, and just keep going from strength to strength. Now ACE and Ere are giving you the chance to visit Paris for a weekend and sample the oh-la-la that goes in to to all those groovy games. AND we're giving 20 runners-up their choice of game from the fabulous Ere range.

THE PARIS PUZZLE

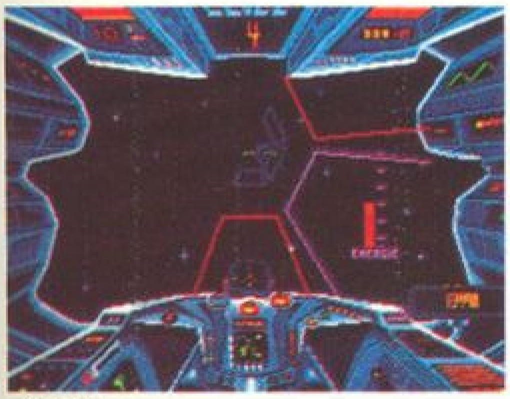
Here are screen shots of four Ere games. Below them are cut outs from the same pictures. All you have to do is match up the sections to the main pictures. So if you think section A is from *Get Dexter*, just write A in the box by *Get Dexter* on the form. C'est facile, n'est-ce-pas?



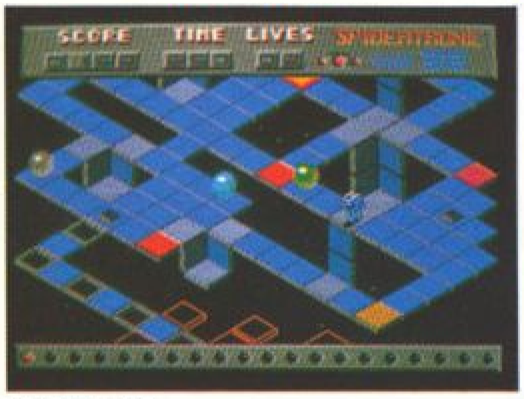
Get Dexter



Captain Blood



Pheonix



Spidertronic

WIN A WEEKEND FOR TWO IN PARIS!

FIRST PRIZE

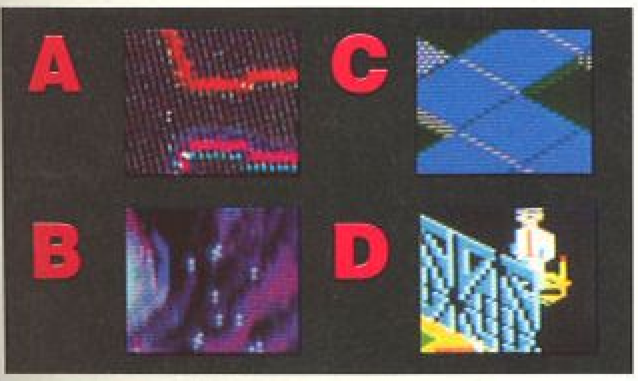
Two nights in Paris at a 3-star hotel for two people, with return air travel between London's Heathrow airport and Paris Charles de Gaulle.

If you go at the weekend, that means a Friday evening departure, returning from Paris on Sunday evening – so you shouldn't need to take more than an afternoon off work or school.

20 SECOND PRIZES

Choose any game from the very desirable Ere International range of titles:

Spidertronic (Atari ST)
Get Dexter I (Amstrad, Atari ST)
Get Dexter II(Amstrad, Atari ST)
Bubble Ghost (Atari ST, C64 available soon, Amiga available soon)
Captain Blood (Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC, Amstrad, C64 available soon)



IMPORTANT NOTE

The prize is for two people. If two people under 18 wish to go, then you will need to be accompanied by someone over 18 years old. We can arrange for additional travellers, but you will, of course, have to pay extra. Travel to and from London Heathrow is the responsibility of the prizewinners.

RULES

1. The closing date for entries is 14th June 1988.
2. At least one member of the party travelling to Paris must be an adult over the age of 18.

ENTRY FORM

Send this form to **PARIS COMPETITION, ACE, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ.**

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

TELEPHONE ....

AGE

COMPUTER OWNED ....

I think the four sections A, B, C and D correspond to the four games as follows:

Get Dexter ☐ *Spidertronic* ☐ *Phoenix* ☐ *Captain Blood* ☐

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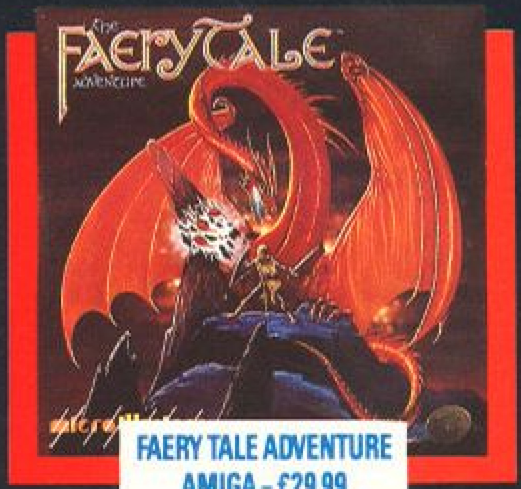
The FaeryTale Adventure
microillusions

FAERY TALE ADVENTURE
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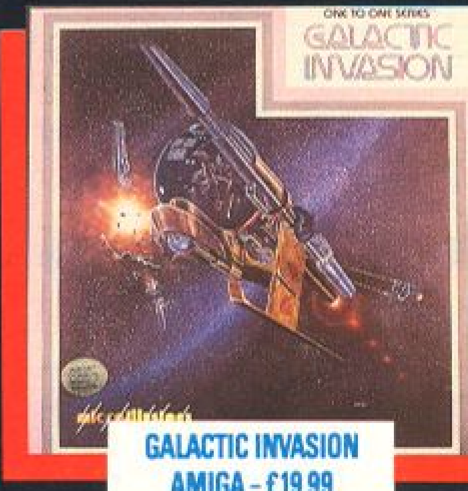
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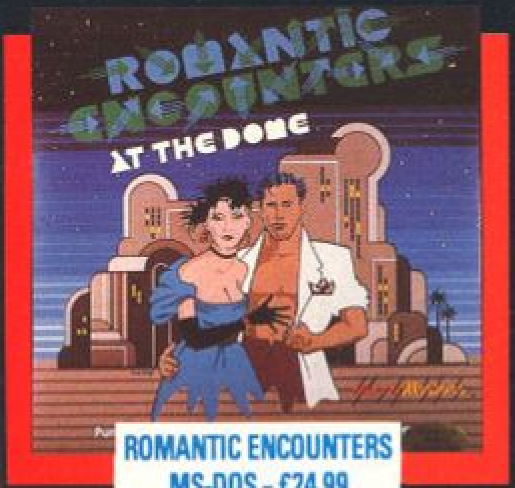
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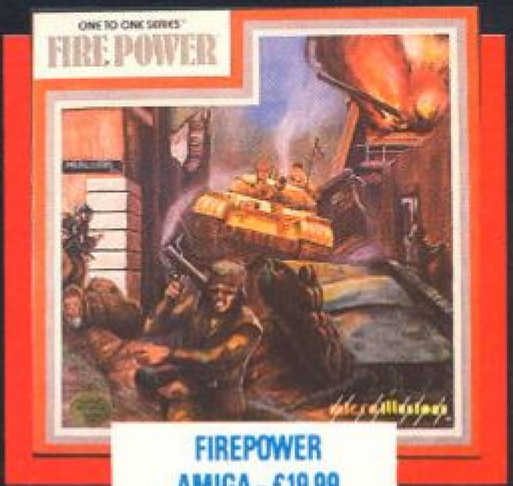
Coming soon... Ebonstar and Photon Paint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BONANZA!

The software cattle drive's about to hit town, so here's just a foretaste of all that prime beef. We'll be weeding out the bum steers over the next couple of ACEs – assuming the games ranches can keep those dogies rollin', that is – so be sure an' git yer copy early, pardners!

EARTH LIGHT

Firebird

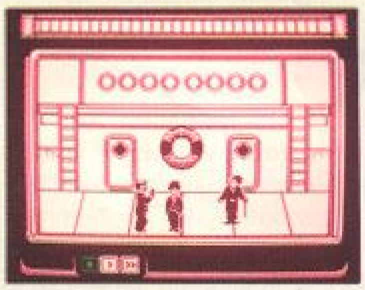
Let's face it, when it comes to clever use of light and shadow in computer games programmer Pete Cooke has just about got it pegged. The lighting effects in his CRL blockbusters *Tau Ceti* and *Academy* stood out for their originality, but the graphics on his first Telecomsoft title could just put those in the shade.

The plot casts you in the role of Slaatn, an alien stranded on the Moon. You have to close the lunar force field down if you're to escape, but that won't be easy thanks to the assorted nasties patrolling the cratered moonscape. Expect to see this one in next month's ACE, with copies of the Spectrum version reaching the shops some time in June.

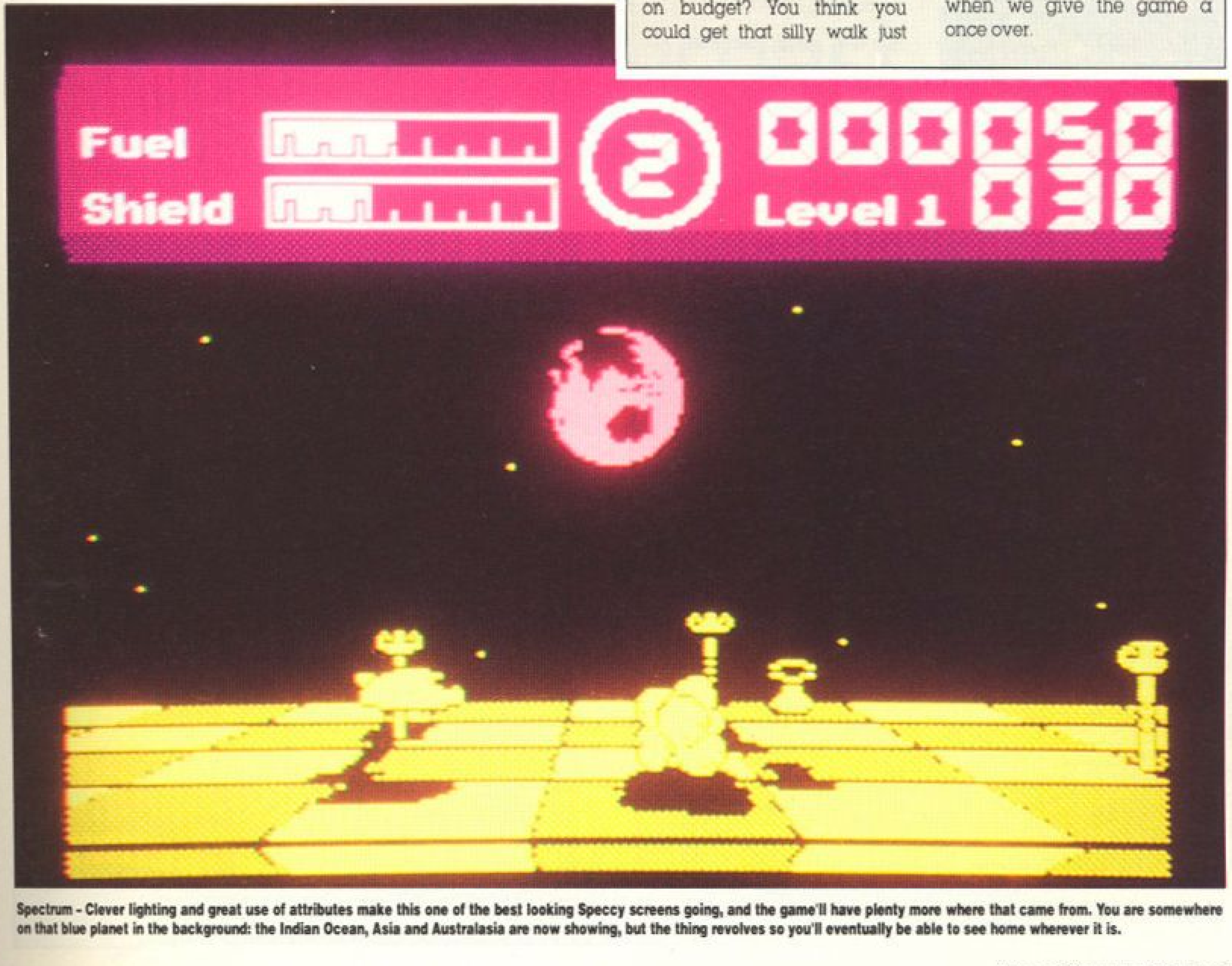
CHARLIE CHAPLIN

US Gold

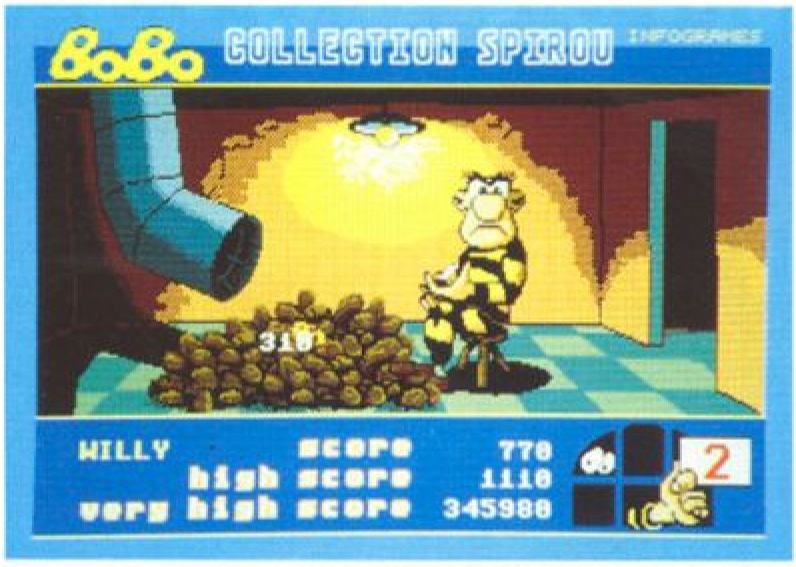
It's been a fair old wait for the fruits of the US Gold people-licensing effort, but this first of them will be ready real soon now. Starring actor, director and all-round good egg Chaplin, the game'll be an arcade adventure where you have to finance and make some of the man's greatest films. You think you could bring *City Lights* in on budget? You think you could get that silly walk just right? Then be sure to book a seat for next month's ACE, when we give the game a once over.



Amstrad - Yes, the game screens are meant to be black and white. What did you expect, Technicolor?



Spectrum - Clever lighting and great use of attributes make this one of the best looking Speccy screens going, and the game'll have plenty more where that came from. You are somewhere on that blue planet in the background: the Indian Ocean, Asia and Australasia are now showing, but the thing revolves so you'll eventually be able to see home wherever it is.

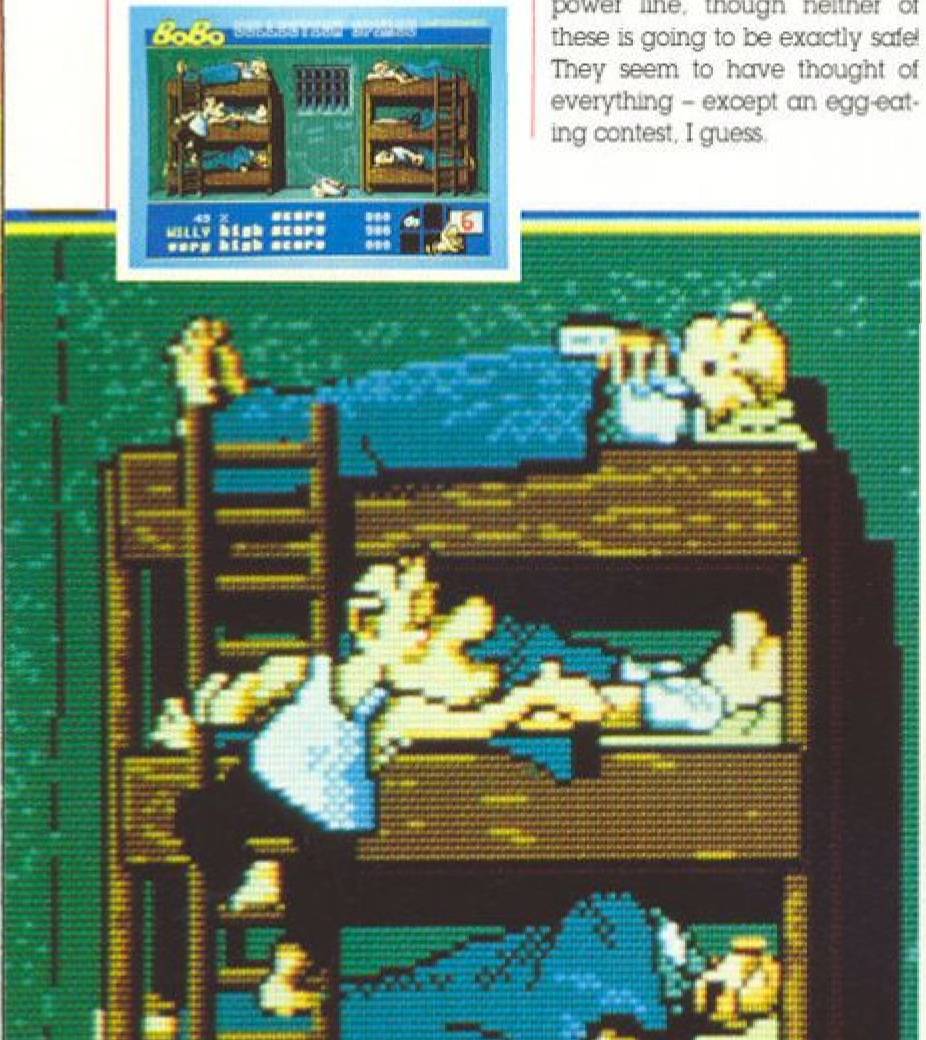

BoBo
COLLECTION SPIROU
INFOGRAMES
310
WILLY
score
high score
very high score
778
1118
345988
2

ST - You'd better peel those spuds faster than that chute delivers them, or you'll be overrun!

BOBO

Infogrames

Jail's not a new topic for French games houses – remember ERE's *Doomsday Blues?* – but this multi-event penitentiary Decathlon certainly finds a new angle on prison life. The emphasis is not so much on escape as on the chores you have to do – spud bashing, floor cleaning, that sort of thing. If all that sounds too mundane you could always try your hand at trampoline pushing or running along a power line, though neither of these is going to be exactly safe! They seem to have thought of everything – except an egg-eating contest, I guess.

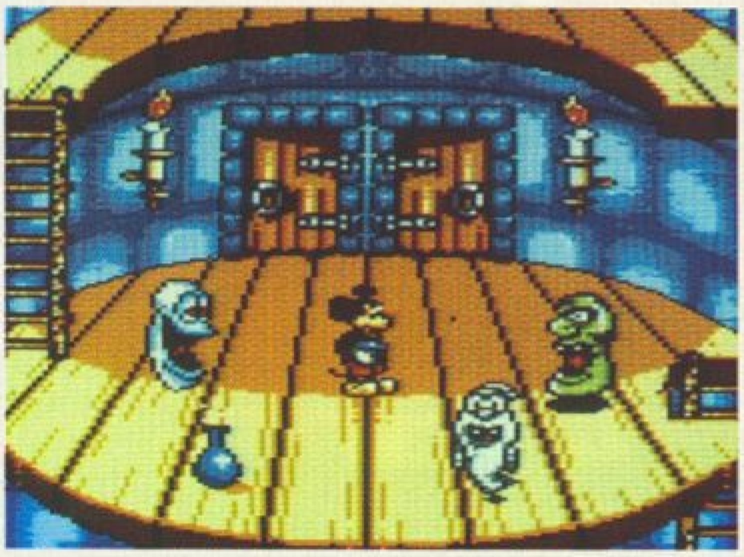

BoBo
WILLY high score
very high score
6

ST - Getting a good night's sleep can be tough going when your cellmates snore, so you'd better try and keep them quiet.

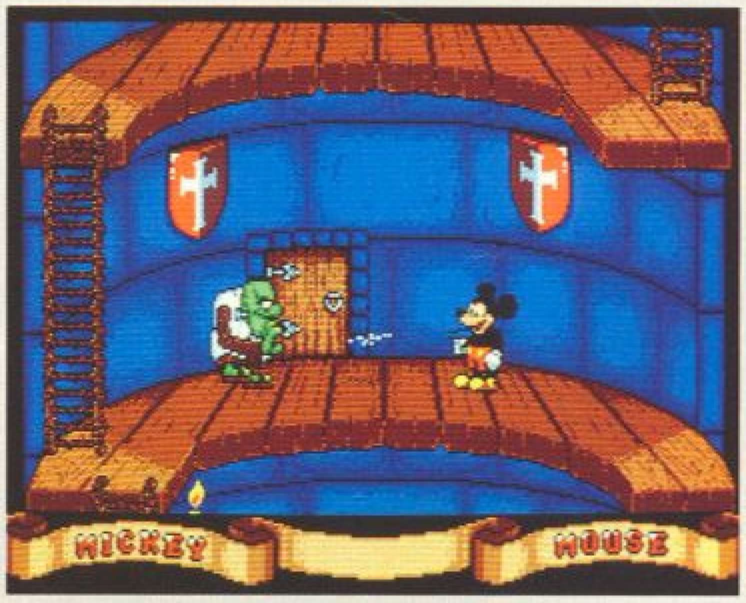
MICKEY MOUSE

Gremlin

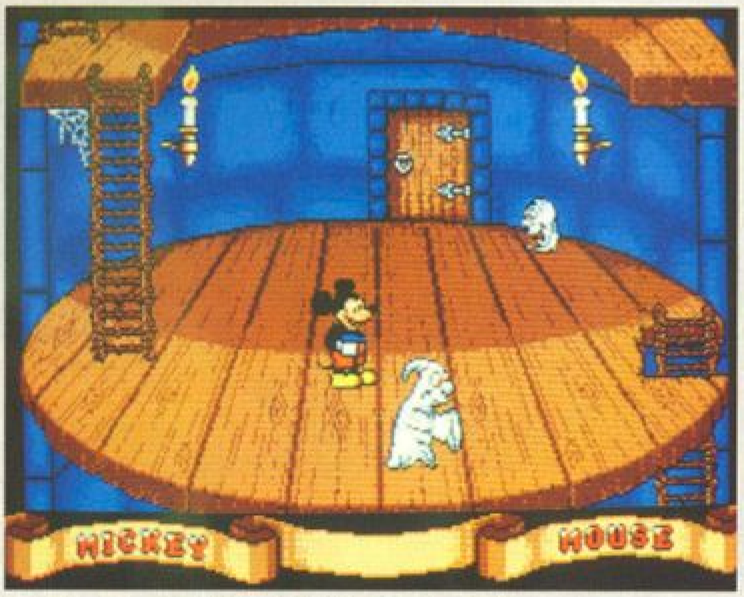
Hollo, Ploodo! Yes, it's Walt Disney's very own Mickey in Gremlin's latest licensed game. It's a cutesy haunted-house-em-up, and if the graphics aren't quite up to cinema standard they're mighty close. How the thing plays is another matter – cutesy graphics don't always go with wildly addictive or interesting games – but doesn't Mickey just look the part?



Amstrad - It just goes to show, you don't need 16-bit machines to get big, bright graphics.


MICKEY
MOUSE

ST - Getting past the big green guy could prove a bit of a problem - he's not just an ugly face!


MICKEY
MOUSE

ST - Who you gonna call? Err, well - Mickey Mouse, actually...

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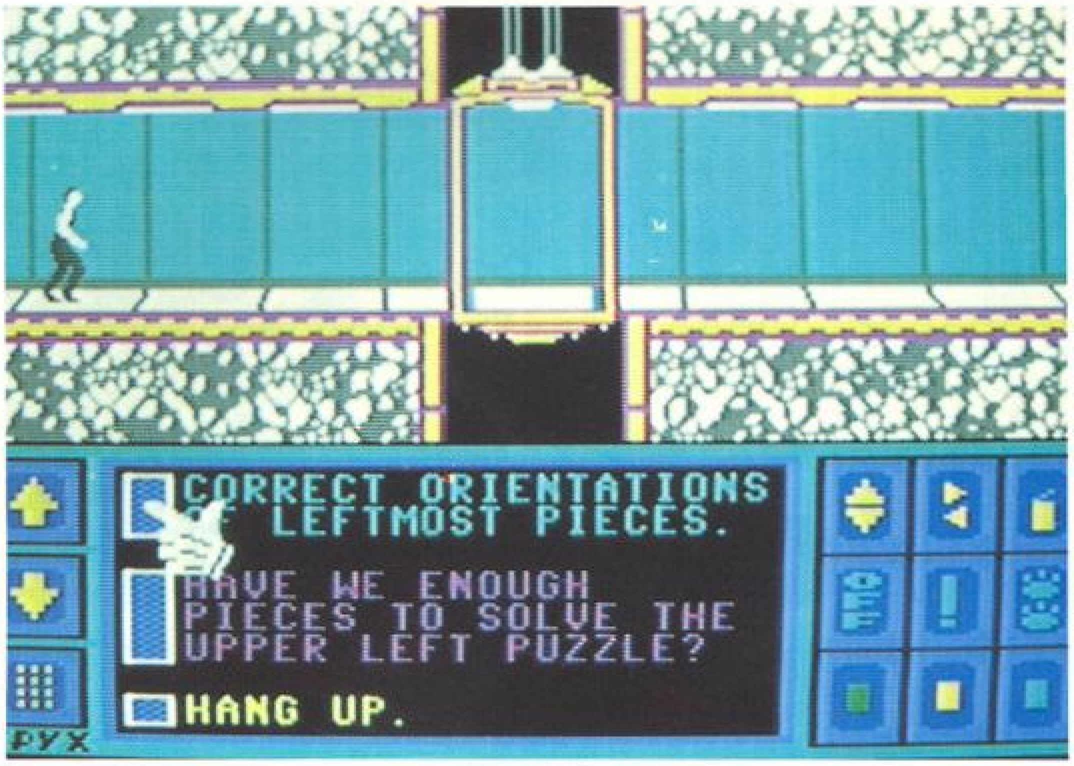
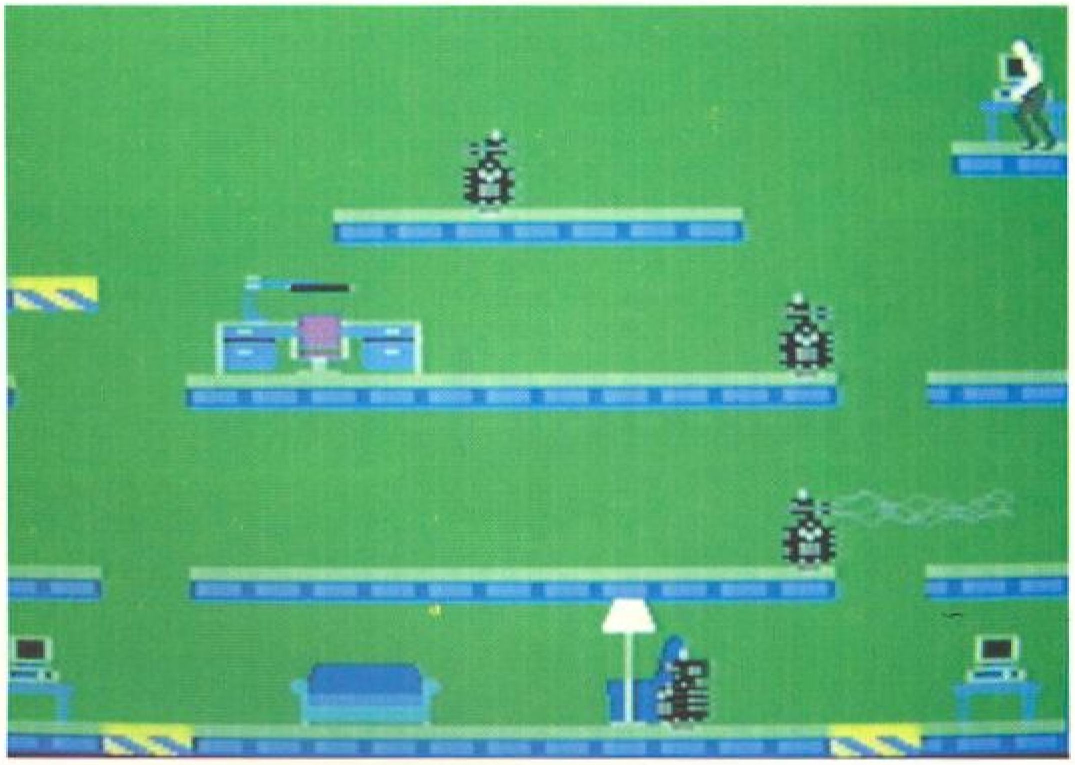
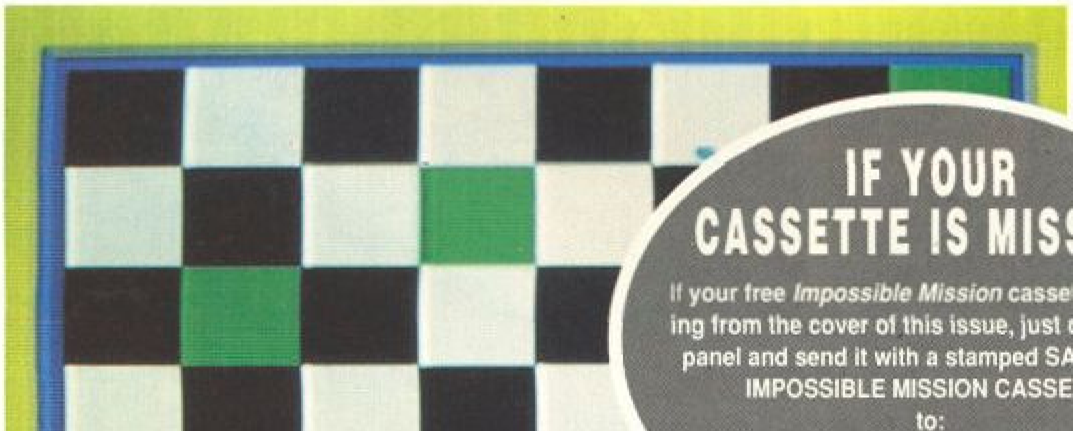


CORRECT ORIENTATIONS
OF LEFTMOST PIECES.

HAVE WE ENOUGH
PIECES TO SOLVE THE
UPPER LEFT PUZZLE?

HANG UP.





IT'S

THE PLOT

Elvin Atombender, a computing genius driven mad by a failed high-score attempt, is hacking his way into the world's missile attack computers. He's now only six hours away from the breakthrough that'll let him trigger a nuclear holocaust. Your mission is to infiltrate his HQ, find the pieces of password hidden in his furniture and use them to break into his control room.

HOW TO PLAY IT

STRUCTURE

Elvin's HQ is made up of a large number of rooms connected by elevators. When you're in an elevator, you can push up or down on your joystick to move to other floors. Leave the elevator by pushing left or right to run off down a corridor and into one of the HQ's rooms.

NORMAL ROOMS

Most of the rooms in the HQ have their furniture poised high up on platforms connected by lifts (or not, as the case may be). Using left and right joystick movements to run and the fire button to somersault you must dodge past Elvin's manhunter robots. Lift pads will get you past the worst of what each room has to offer – just stand on them and push up or down – but they can get you into trouble too. If a lift pad goes down to floor level, there'll be a dangerous hole below it once it's raised. Falling off the screen carries the same penalty as touching or being shot by a robot: a loss of ten minutes from the six hours total time available for the mission.

Stand in front of each item of furniture in turn, and then use an upward joystick movement to search it. A bar will appear, decreasing in length as your search progresses. Once you've completely searched an item it disappears, leaving you with either a password or nothing at all. You can break off a search before it's complete, and then take up where you left off once danger's passed. Leave the room or try searching another item in the meantime however, and you'll have to start all over again.

Passwords come in three kinds: 'snoozes' which you can use to temporarily disable all the robots in a room, 'lift inits' which you can use to reset all the lifts in a room to their original position, and pieces of the control room password, which you need to complete the game. To use snoozes or inits, you must search one of the many computer terminals dotted around Elvin's lair. Instead of giving you the normal search bar, this offers you a joystick-operated menu.

CODE ROOMS

Searching furniture isn't the only way to get hold of those vital snoozes and lift inits. You can get extra ones in two special rooms, but you'll have to solve musical puzzles to get them. The puzzles always take the same form: when you search the room's central console (push up when you're directly in front of it, that is) the game plays a tune and marks off squares on the large chequered

IF YOUR CASSETTE IS MISSING

If your free *Impossible Mission* cassette is missing from the cover of this issue, just cut out this panel and send it with a stamped SAE marked
IMPOSSIBLE MISSION CASSETTE
to:
ACE, 4 QUEEN STREET
BATH BA1 1EJ
to get a **FREE** replacement.

IMPOSSIBLE!

Hard to believe, isn't it – the stupendous US Gold/Epyx blockbuster and all-round computer classic *Impossible Mission*, free on the cover of this very magazine! Well you'd better believe it because crammed onto that cassette are the C64, Amstrad CPC, Spectrum and BBC Micro versions of the incredibly playable arcade adventure, complete in every respect. There's no catch – it's not a demo or cut-down version but the real, full-blown thing! It just goes to show, nothing's impossible when ACE and US Gold get together – except the task in store for you just as soon as you cram that tape into your cassette player!

board in front of you.

By moving a 'glove' pointer over the board and pressing the fire button to select a square you must play back the notes of the tune in ascending order – lowest note first, highest last, in other words. Selecting the purple bar aborts the puzzle. Each time you successfully complete a puzzle in a room, the sequence of notes gets longer so there's a limit to how many snoozes or lift inits you can get this way.

POCKET COMPUTER

All told, you need 36 password pieces to make a complete password and get into the control room. These pieces fit together in fours, so as to make nine punched cards. You've got to work out how they fit together yourself, with only a pocket computer to help you.

To access your pocket computer, simply press fire when you're outside a room. This swaps the map in the centre of the display for a puzzle screen, where you can manipulate pieces and slot them together. On the left you can see two of the pieces you've collected so far – you can scroll the rest of the pieces through this window using the arrow icons to the left of this – while on the right there's a workspace with room for four pieces.

To fit the pieces together you first have to copy them into the workspace. To copy a piece just click on it (move the glove pointer over it and press the fire button) and then click on an empty slot in the workspace. You can only work on one of the workspace pieces at a time: this 'selected' piece is highlighted so as to stand out. If you want to select a different piece, just click on it.

You can change the selected piece's colour, 'flip' it vertically or 'flop' it horizontally using the icons on the right side of the screen, so that it will fit another piece on the workspace. To fit together, two pieces must be the same colour and must not overlap when they're stacked one on the other.

Once you reckon you've got a fit, you can try it out by clicking on the selected piece, moving it over the piece you think it goes with and then pressing the fire button: the pocket computer will reject this if the pieces overlap. Once you've fitted four pieces together the puzzle's complete, though you may have to flip or flop it (or both) before the computer accepts it.

Just because you've fitted two or even three pieces together doesn't mean they actually belong to the same puzzle: if you've got all 36 pieces and you still can't find a fourth one that fits, you've probably assembled the first three incorrectly. To get rid of a failed attempt, just select it and then click on the trash can icon on the right-hand pad.

If you get really stuck on the puzzling section, you can trade off time by dialling through to your own home base. Just click on the phone keypad icon at bottom left to get at the dialling menu. This puts the mighty base computer at your disposal: you can get it to flip or flop the two pieces in the memory (left-hand) window so that they're the right way round, or alternatively to tell you whether you've got the three pieces that go with the upper piece in the memory window. Handy enough stuff, but bear in mind that each call costs two minutes of game time!

Once you've assembled all nine punched cards, you have only to reach the control room door – it's a big square thing in one of the rooms. Just stand in front of the thing, push upwards and Elvin's fate is sealed!

THE IMPOSSIBLE MISSION PHENOMENON

It's hard to think of a more influential game than the original C64 version of *Impossible Mission*. An instant and uncontested Game of the Month on Personal Computer Games when it was launched, it is to the Commodore what Elite is to the BBC Micro or Knight Lore to the Spectrum: if anything it's stood the test of time rather better than these two, in fact. What's more, it's translated to the other big 8-bit micros remarkably well with that tough jump-judgement, those nerve-wracking robots, and all the mind-mangling puzzles still very much in evidence.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

If you like *Impossible Mission* – and you will, you will! – why not take a look at the Epyx follow-up *Impossible Mission II*? There's all the same somersaulting and robot dodging plus brand new room layouts and puzzles, making it an essential purchase for all truly dedicated Elvin-bashers!

HOW TO LOAD IT

C64
Hold down SHIFT and press RUN/STOP. Then press PLAY on your cassette unit.

AMSTRAD
Hold down CTRL and press the small ENTER key. Then press PLAY on the cassette unit followed by any key on the keyboard.

SPECTRUM
48K Spectrums: Type LOAD"" and press ENTER. Then press PLAY on your cassette unit.
128K Spectrums: Select 48K Basic and load as above.

BBC MICRO
Type CH." " and press RETURN. Start tape.

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If you encounter any loading difficulty, please first check that you have followed the loading instructions on this page correctly, and that your system is able to load other games satisfactorily.

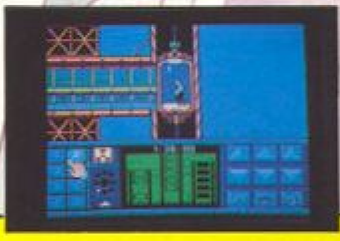
It's here-The return of Elvin Atombender!

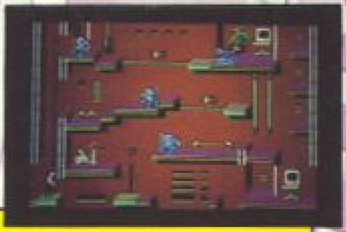
IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II™

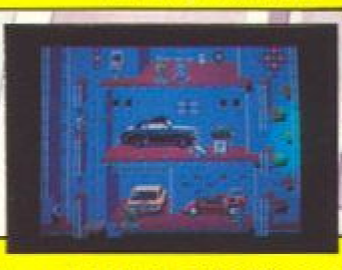
Unsurpassed Espionage Action...

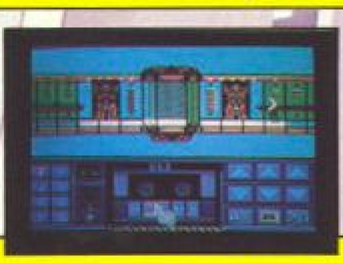
After two year's wait at last it's arrived—the sequel to beat all sequels! Impossible Mission II retains all the fun and strategy of the original as once again you embark on the challenge to find a safe route to Elvin and the final showdown where he will meet his end! Search each room, find code numbers, objects and keys to help you with your mission. You must avoid or destroy the guards and robots that patrol the five towers or risk being destroyed yourself.

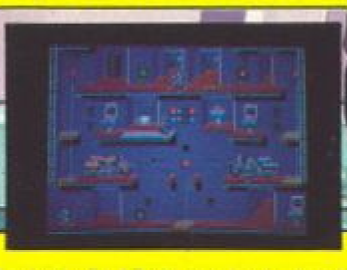
Successfully dispose of Elvin and your quest is half over! Now your Mission becomes truly Impossible as you strive to escape the towers, avoiding guards, robots, mines, trap doors and elevators without detection!

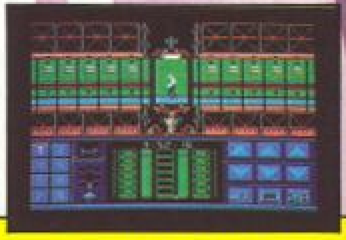

...From the lift you enter the first room...

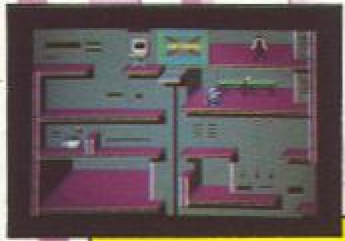

...But where to next?...

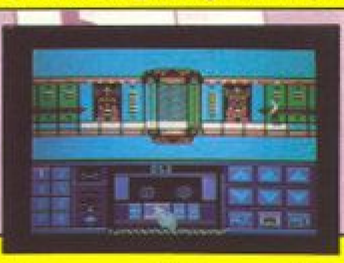

...Who or what is lurking behind these cars?...

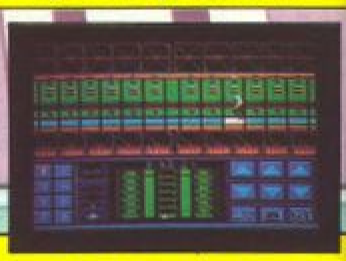

...Can you access the next tower?...


...Could the final P.I.N. number be here?...


...Running into more trouble?...


...Why is the robot guarding that table?...


...A message on the tape recorder?...


...Quick! Escape from Elvin!!...

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Spectrum 48/128K		**£8.99 cassette**
Atari ST	**£19.99 disk**	**COMING SOON!**
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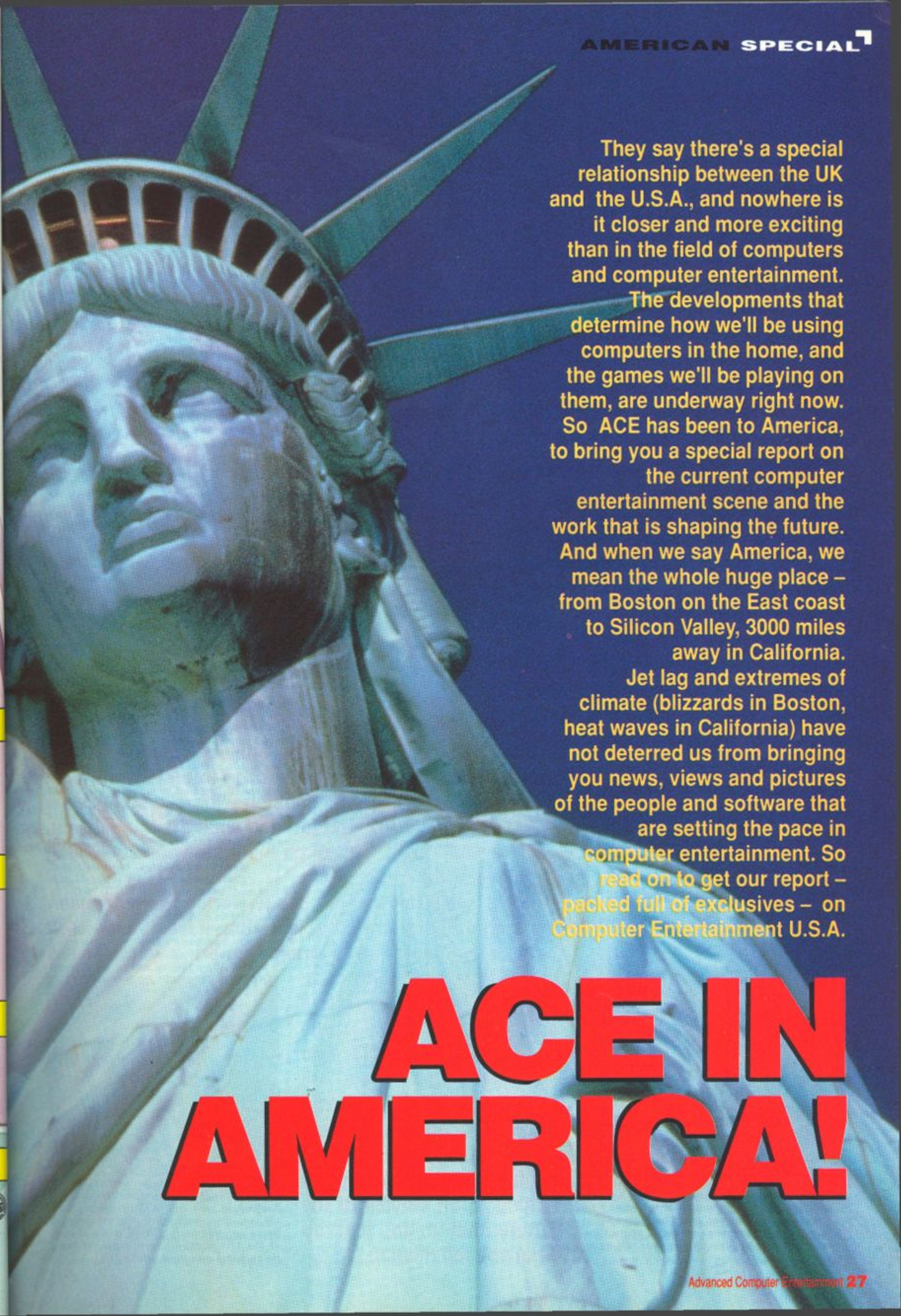
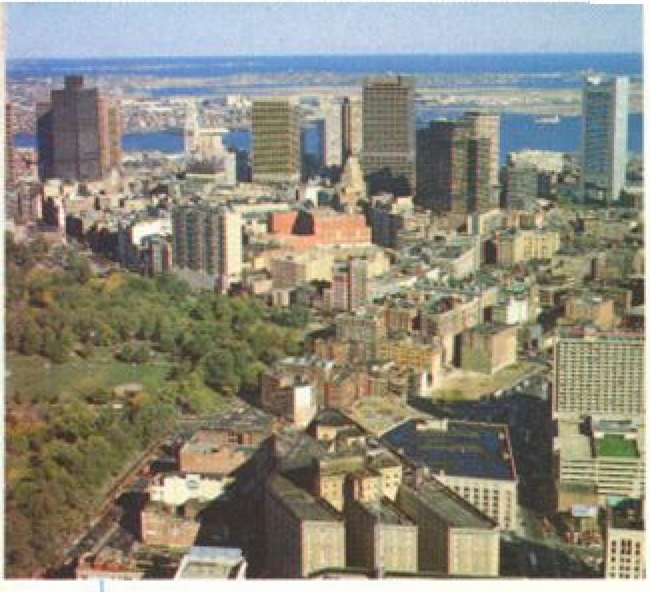


ACE IN AMERICA!

They say there's a special relationship between the UK and the U.S.A., and nowhere is it closer and more exciting than in the field of computers and computer entertainment. The developments that determine how we'll be using computers in the home, and the games we'll be playing on them, are underway right now. So ACE has been to America, to bring you a special report on the current computer entertainment scene and the work that is shaping the future. And when we say America, we mean the whole huge place – from Boston on the East coast to Silicon Valley, 3000 miles away in California. Jet lag and extremes of climate (blizzards in Boston, heat waves in California) have not deterred us from bringing you news, views and pictures of the people and software that are setting the pace in computer entertainment. So read on to get our report – packed full of exclusives – on Computer Entertainment U.S.A.



BOSTON

Once famous largely for its Red Sox and anti-English tea parties, Boston is now the centre of what you might call an east coast Silicon Valley. Spreading out from the city in to the surrounding countryside of Massachusetts are dozens of high-tech companies, making everything from games up to supercomputers.

Why? Well, Boston and Cambridge (just across the river) must have one of the highest boffins-per-square-mile quotients in the world; not only do we find here the world-famous Harvard University, but also the equally world-famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or MIT for short. This place has got more computers than a muskrat's got fleas; it's also got a research centre where some of the ways computers will interact with us (humans, that is) in the future are being explored....

INVENTING THE FUTURE

▲ **WIRED UP.**
Instead of moving a mouse around your desk, or twiddling a joystick, what if the computer could respond to movements of your hand or eye? This researcher is testing out just such an idea, hence the curious power pack on his rear and the sawing motion of the hand. The implications for games could be far-reaching; imagine games where you could control the action merely by lifting a finger or raising an eyebrow....

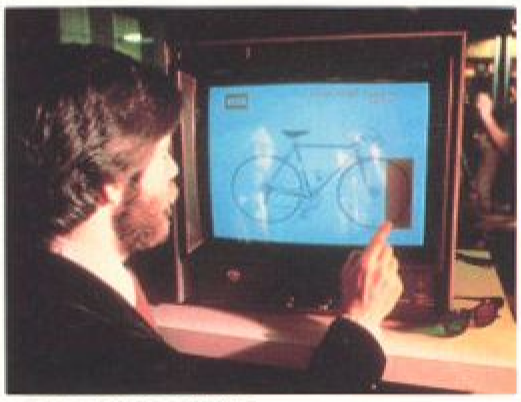
MEDIA LAB

Take a specially-designed, 40 million dollar building; stir in millions more dollars of corporate sponsorship; add a lot of free hardware from the likes of Apple, DEC, Mitsubishi; liberally sprinkle the best researchers throughout; and what do you get? You get the Media Lab, a research institute whose only brief is to 'invent the future'.

Here you'll find people busily working on computer-generated holograms of objects that haven't even been built; on computer newspapers that bring you the news you want at the touch of an icon; on the interactive computer desktop that will answer (aloud) 'When do you want to go?' if you tell it to book a ticket to London; on graphics systems that animates the action of a play while the author is writing it; on Movies of the Future that might just do what you tell them to.

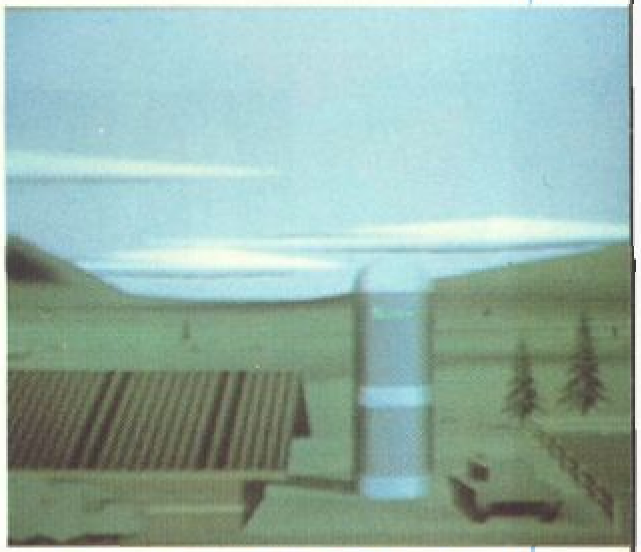
PEI IN THE SKY?
The Media Lab's swanky building on the campus of the Massachussetts Institute of Technology was designed by the architect I.M.Pei, also responsible for the pyramid that's recently been erected in the grounds of the 17th century Louvre palace in Paris. He certainly gets some wacky jobs....

TERMINAL GARDEN
They don't have anything as mundane as a 'Computer Room' at Media Lab; instead, it's a 'terminal garden', where all those ugly system boxes are tucked away out of sight, and the boffins can compute surrounded by green and living things.



▲ TOUCH SCREENS
A lot of the Lab's work is about improving the human-computer interface; touch screen interaction is proving to be one way forward. This push-bike image is a model of how an interactive repair manual could work; highlight the area you want to inquire about and follow the questions until you get the required information.

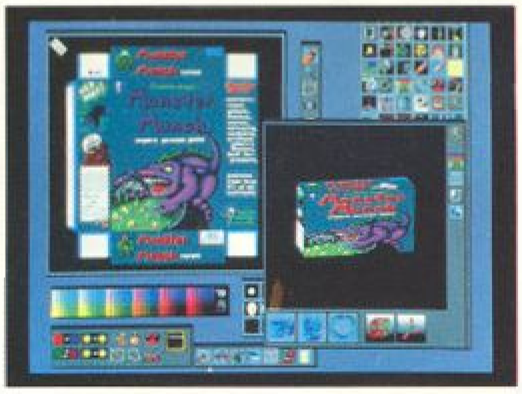
▼ TANK ATTACK.
This pic is from a flight/combat simulator developed at the Lab. It's a great shame we're unlikely to see it produced on a Media Lab Games label.



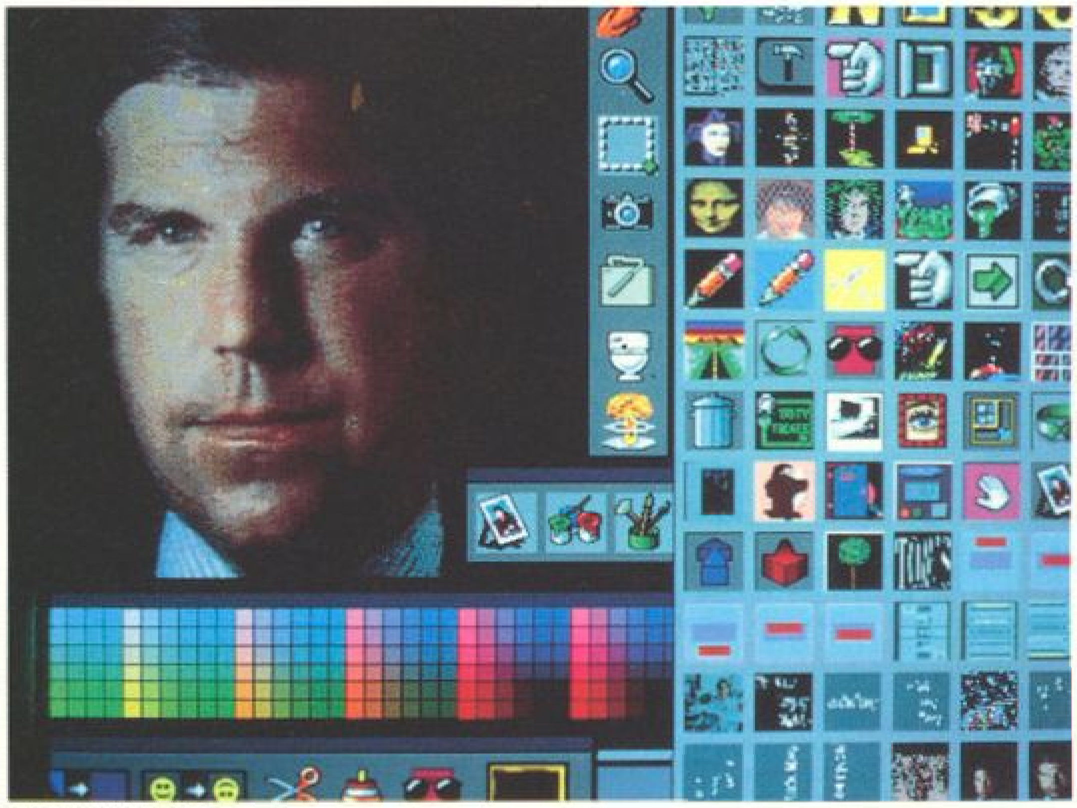
▲ SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE?
Bristling with computers is what the school of the future will be, if Professor Seymour Papert has his way (and if that name sounds familiar, it's because Papert is the author of the user-friendly LOGO programming language). The picture is actually taken from a Boston school where Papert's ideas are being tested out. He describes the project as a 'sketch of what the school of the future will be like', whose aim is to 'create a computer culture.' Papert believes that, hitherto, computers have done more harm than good in education, usually ending up as means to teach computer programming.

The computer school sees computers being used as tools to help in learning about other disciplines, even to excite children about the very process of thinking itself. So far the experiment, in a multi-cultural inner-city Boston school, has proved successful; attendance is up on the normal methods and the children appear to enjoy the new methods.

▼ SUPER PAINTING
Monster Munch is a cereal box label design produced on the Lab's very own – and, apparently, very user-friendly – paint box system. There is a huge amount of images and hues available to the user.



▲ TRADE IN YOUR MOUSE?
This cuddly, if oversized, crittur is actually a mouse. Well, it's an input device. It was designed to help younger children find the computer a more friendly and approachable piece of equipment. I'd like one myself, but there's not quite enough room on my desktop...



▲ THE DIRECTOR
On the same graphics system, the Director of the Media Lab, Nicholas Negroponte. He's a man who produces either intense admiration or profound scorn; some believe he's a visionary who has seen how the future will work, others think his idea of the Media Lab is, to put it politely, half-baked. We won't really be able to judge for quite a few years, until some of the ideas the Lab is working on might have turned in to consumer products or industrial processes. In the meantime, Negroponte succeeds in attracting mucho dinero from the likes of IBM and Time Inc., who don't want to get left out of something that might, just might, bear great big juicy fruit (profits) in the future.

THE COMPUTER MUSEUM
The museum stands on an old wharf in downtown Boston, a mere stone's throw from where they held that famous Tea Party.

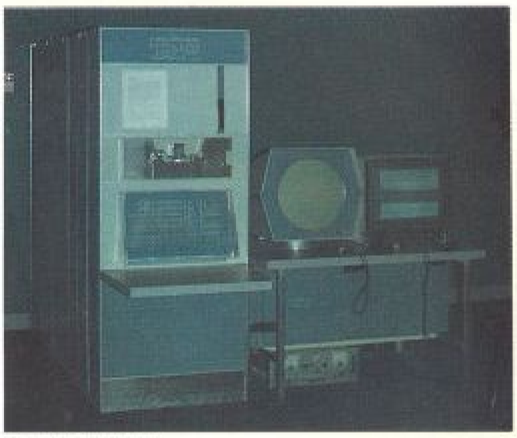
THE MUSEUM

If the very idea of a museum makes you want to get your head down for a kip, let me say right know that the Bostono outfit was one of the most interesting places I visited in the States; not only does it have a great collection of computer dinosaurs, but everything is beautifully displayed and explained. And it's not just full of heavy business gear; they've got excellent interactive displays on graphics and music, a robotics room, and they host conferences on topics close to our heart, such as the history and future of computer games.

The museum's origins go back to 1974 when the executives from Digital Equipment Corporation and Mitre Corporation salvaged the MIT Whirlwind – the world's first real-time, parallel, vacuum-tube computer with a core memory. This was the beginning of DEC's collection of early computers, which was later added to two other collections to form the museum as it now stands. And, yes – in the room where the micros go to die, they've even got a good ol' ZX81.

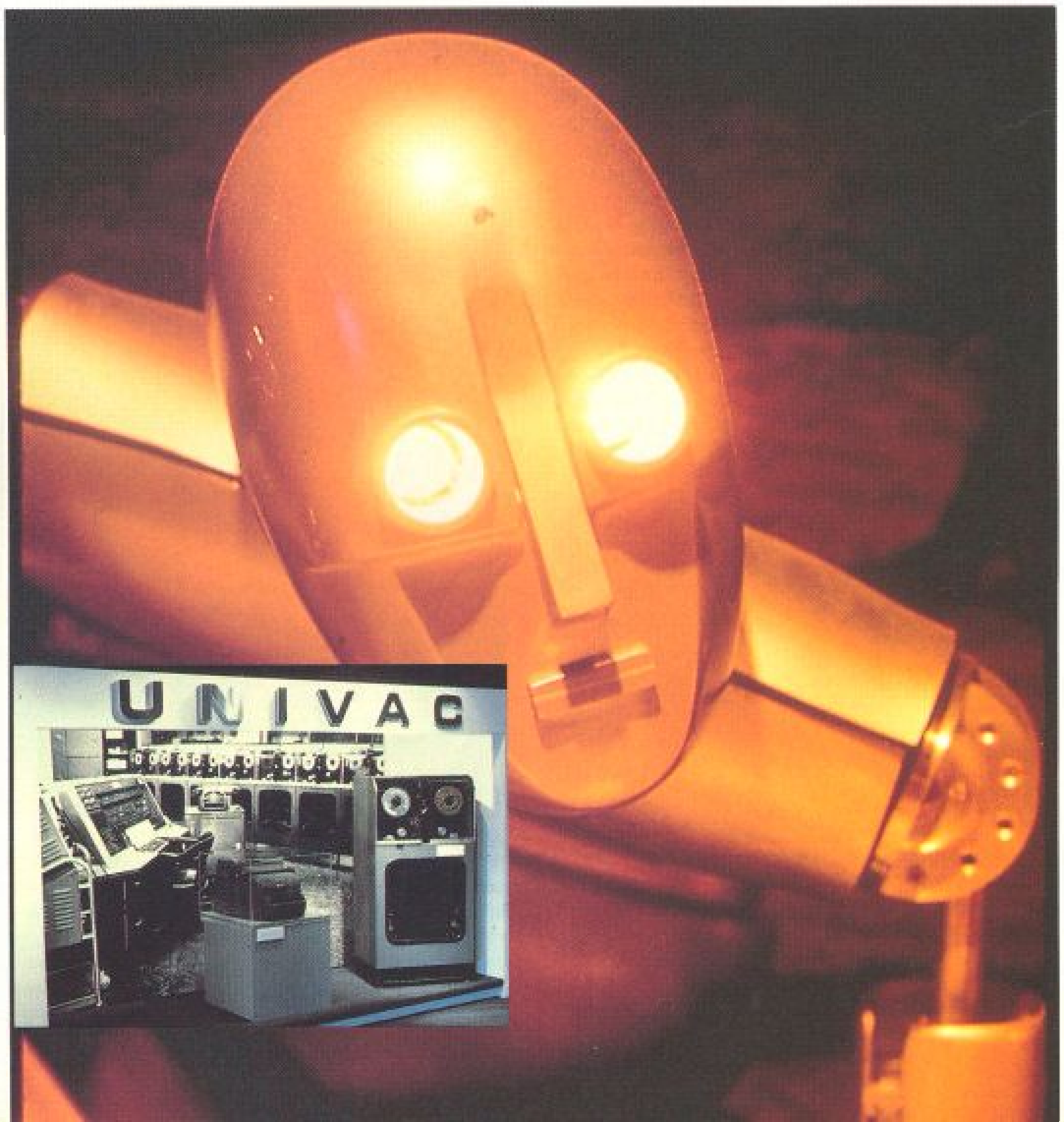
...RESCUING THE PAST

▶ WELCOME TO MY WORLD
The character on the there is doorman to the Computer Museum's robotics theatre, stuffed full of our computerised servants.



▲ SPACEWAR!
This modest little number – minus the Mac – was all you would have needed to run the world's first ever interactive computer game, way back in 1962. The machine is a PDP-1, and the game was called Spacewar!, a kind of proto-Asteroids. It was designed and programmed by three MIT computer scientists – Steve 'Slug' Russell, Alan Kotok and Martin 'Shag' Graetz. You certainly can't buy the game these days, but if you visit the museum you can play on the Mac alongside the old timer.

▶ MAINFRAME MONSTERS
This Univac system from the 1950s is a gleaming example of the world we've left behind. Definitely not the sort of thing you'd want to keep in the bedroom (and it can't even run Spacewars!)



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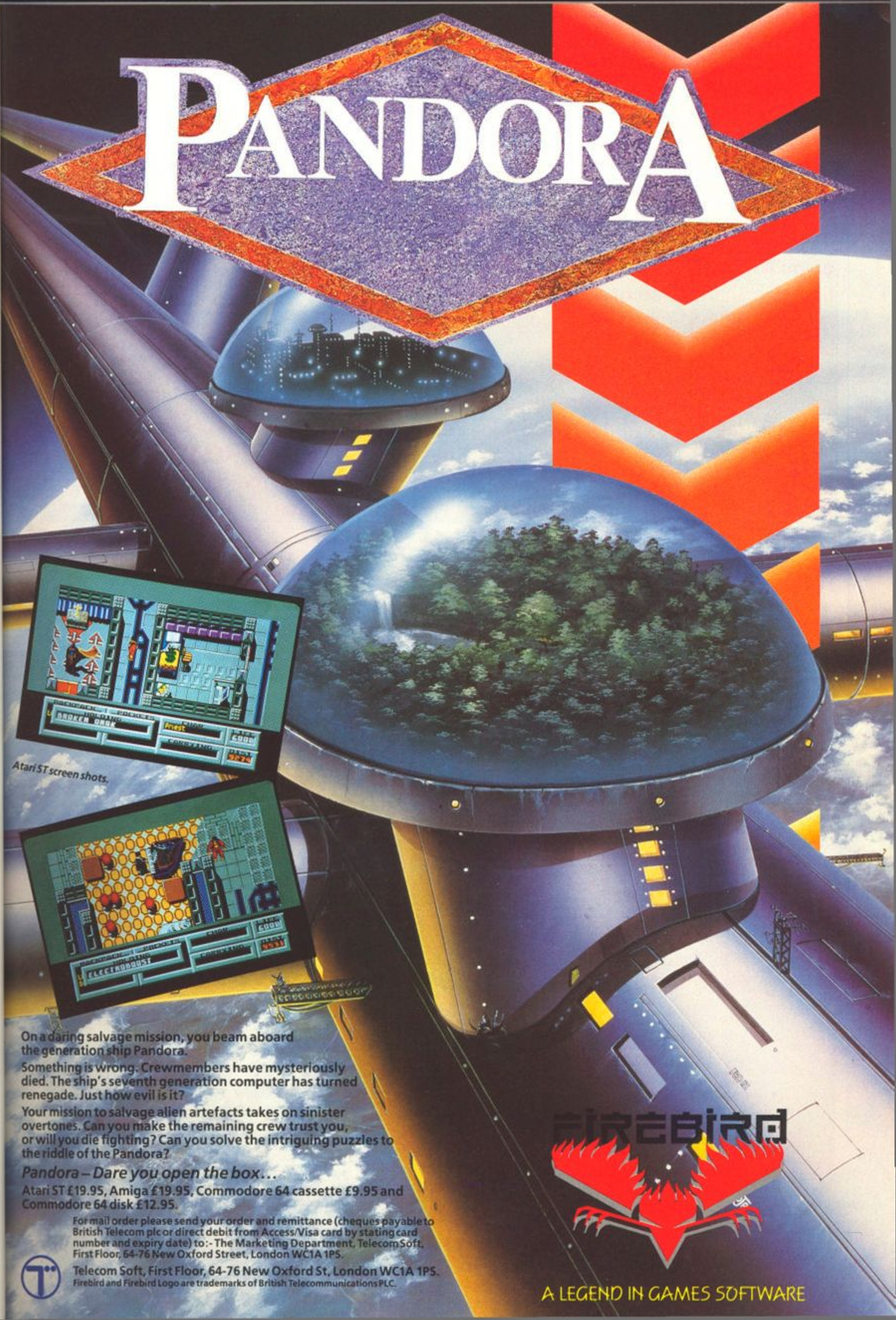
PANDORA
FIREBIRD
A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWARE

Atari ST screen shots.

On a daring salvage mission, you beam aboard the generation ship Pandora.

Something is wrong. Crewmembers have mysteriously died. The ship's seventh generation computer has turned renegade. Just how evil is it?

Your mission to salvage alien artefacts takes on sinister overtones. Can you make the remaining crew trust you, or will you die fighting? Can you solve the intriguing puzzles to the riddle of the Pandora?

Pandora – Dare you open the box…

Atari ST £19.95, Amiga £19.95, Commodore 64 cassette £9.95 and Commodore 64 disk £12.95.

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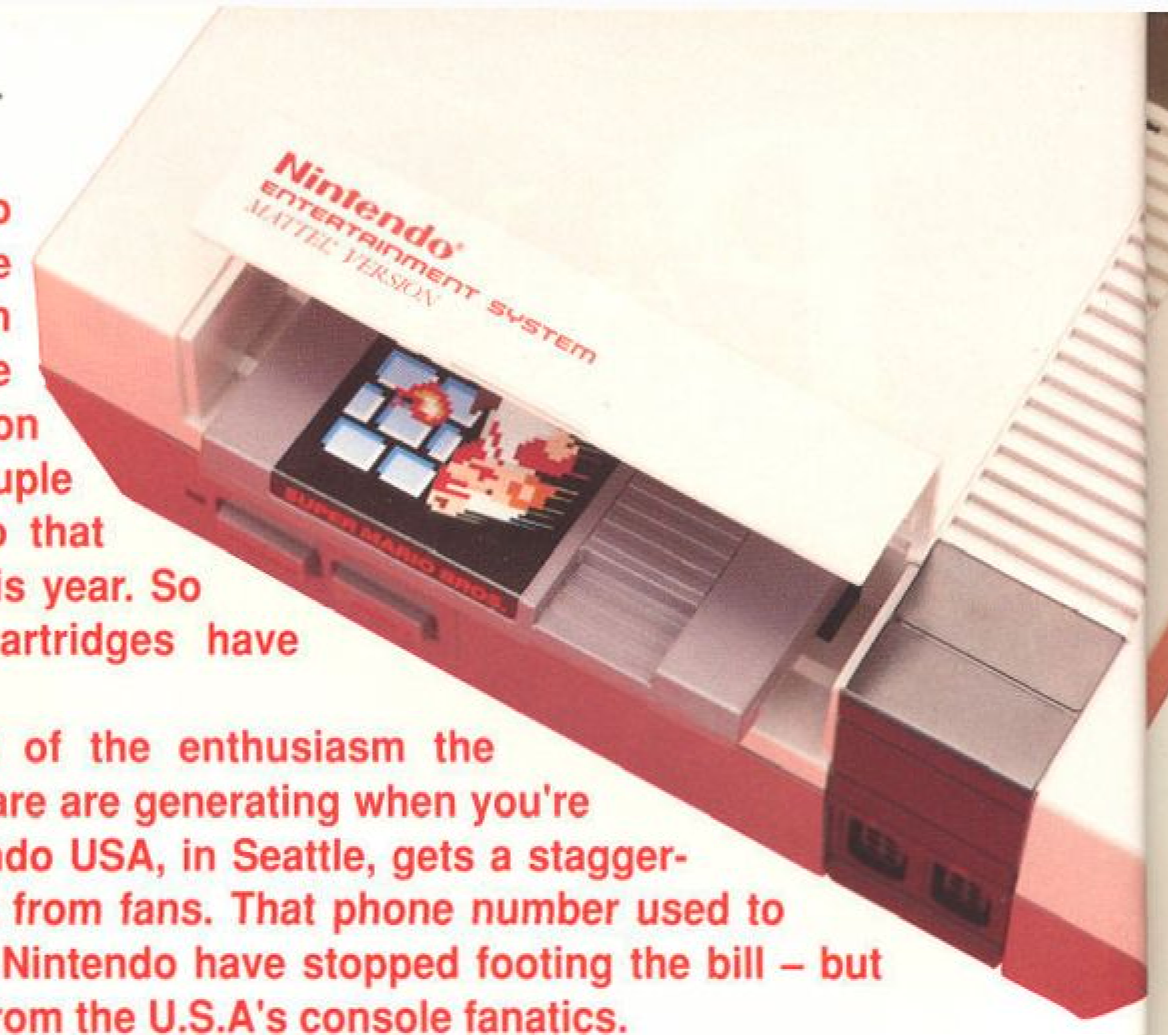

Nintendo
Entertainment System
MATTEL VERSION
SUPER MARIO BROS.

Or you might say Nintendo Nutty, because there are an estimated 4.5 million Nintendo consoles in the U.S.A. And people reckon there are going to be a couple of million more added to that figure in the course of this year. So far 15 million games cartridges have been sold.

You can get an idea of the enthusiasm the machines and their software are generating when you're told that the HQ of Nintendo USA, in Seattle, gets a staggering 48,000 calls per week from fans. That phone number used to be free; sensibly enough Nintendo have stopped footing the bill – but those calls keep coming from the U.S.A's console fanatics.

CONSOLE

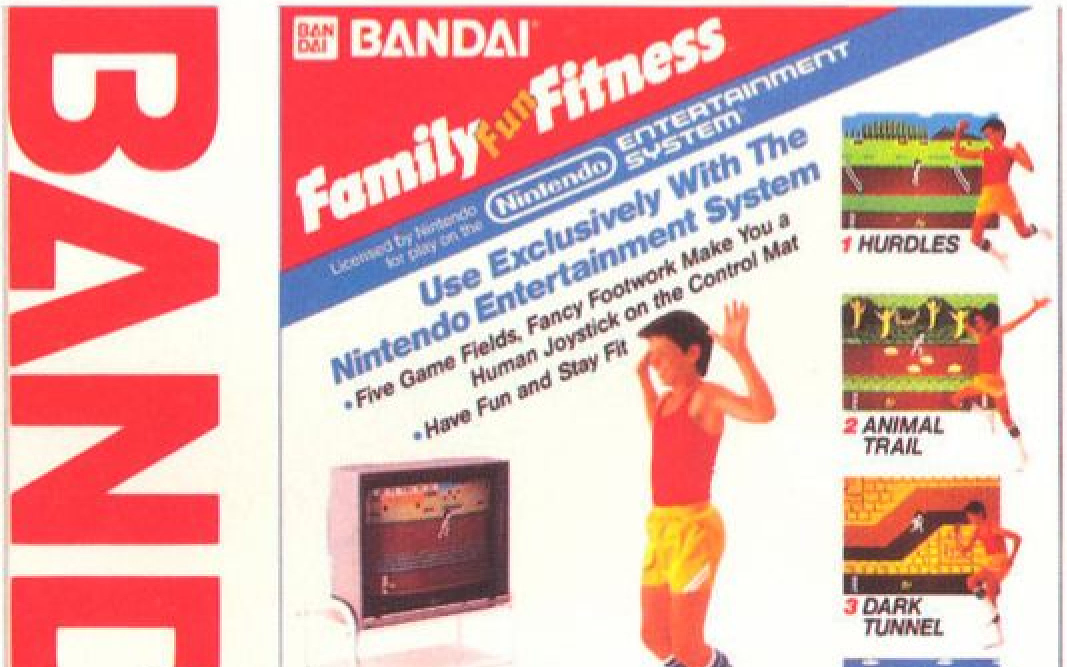
▶ THE HUMAN JOYSTICK?

Cor! Play a game and get fit at the same time – that's the promise of the Bandai Family Fun and Fitness outfit. In each of the five game 'fields' you have to jig about on the 'control mat' in order to score points and win. It may be OK for the youngsters, but aged parents should probably think twice before going wild.

The Experts in Accessories
MADE
IN
U.S.A.

▲ ACCESSORIES

Naturally, a lot of people are trying to earn a dollar from the Nintendo boom. Wouldn't you just love to have one of these purpose-built cartridge holders? At $5.99 – that's around £3.35 – it seems like pretty good value. Notice that like everything else asociated with the nifty consoles, the product has been 'evaluated and approved' by Nintendo.


BAND
BANDAI
Family Fun Fitness
Nintendo Entertainment System
Licensed by Nintendo for play on the
Use Exclusively With The Nintendo Entertainment System
• Five Game Fields, Fancy Footwork Make You a Human Joystick on the Control Mat
• Have Fun and Stay Fit
1 HURDLES
2 ANIMAL TRAIL
3 DARK TUNNEL
4 HOP A LOG

◀ PC ENGINE

This, despite its diminutive size, is a 16-bit games console, from NEC rather than Nintendo. It's already on sale in Japan, but is as yet unavailable in either the U.S.A. or Britain – and it may never be. The Japanese game I saw running on it featured enormous sprites with excellent animation. Software comes in the shape of smart cards you just slot in.

ACCLAIM

Greg Fischbach and Rob Holmes perch on the porch of Acclaim's pretty Oyster Bay HQ

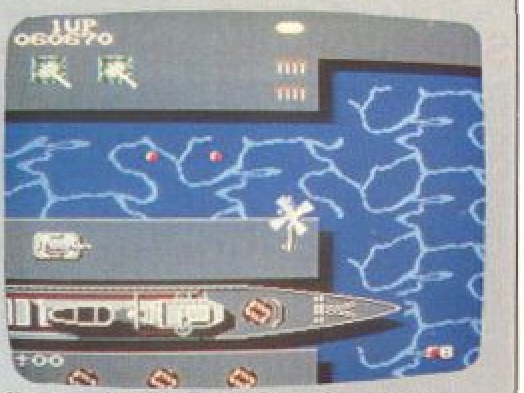
Just outside New York, in picturesque Oyster Bay on the shores of Long Island, are to be found one of the big names in the U.S.A.'s booming Nintendo software business – Acclaim. Naturally, we went to see what they were all about.

Acclaim's claim to fame is that they were the first Americans to ask for and be given a licence by Nintendo – a company notoriously wary about relinquishing control of any part of their operation.

And it's worked out very nicely for them; in their first full year of trading they sold around 8 million dollars' worth of games. This is less surprising when you learn that the folks behind Acclaim have a pretty impressive pedigree; the company President is none other than erstwhile Activision boss Greg Fischbach, while Senior VP Rob Holmes also worked for Activision in the not-too-distant past.

The source of some of Acclaim's software may come as a surprise; one of their big-selling titles has been *Wizards and Warriors*, designed and programmed by Rare Ltd – who are, of course, our own, our very own, Ulimate Play The Game in their latest incarnation as Nintendo game manufacturers.

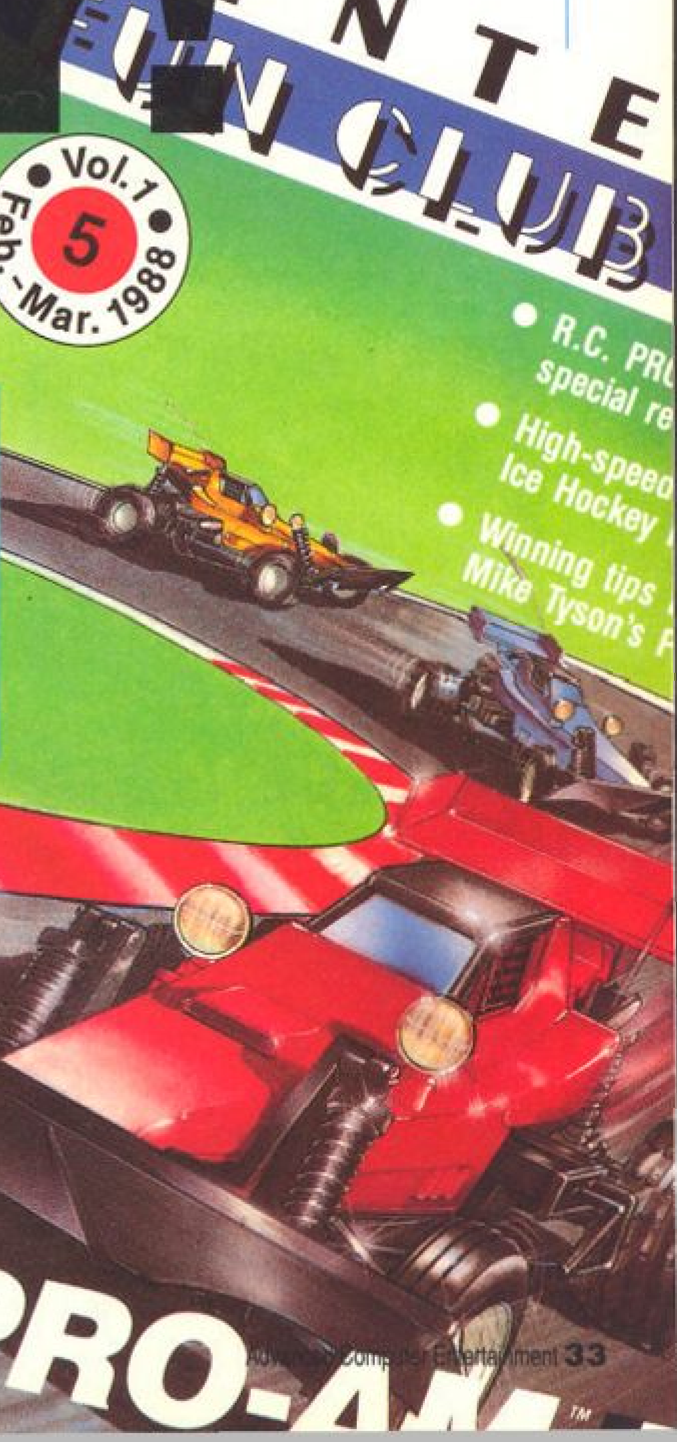
Which prompts the question as to when we'll be seeing W and W and other Acclaim titles in this country. Greg Fischbach is very cagey on this point: 'We'll be there when Nintendo think the market can support it. We have to sequence our priorities. We've no plans at the moment.' But if the Nintendo market takes off in the this year, don't be too surprised if Acclaim is a name you start seeing on your games....



Chopper taking off in *Tiger Heli*, one of Acclaims's successful action games.

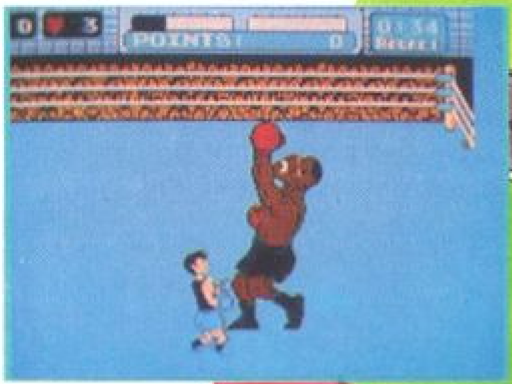
E CRAZY!

Nintendo have done a pretty thorough job of supporting their invasion of America. They publish their own users' magazine - *Nintendo Fun Club* News, which is packed with tips, news, high score tables and, of course, adverts. There are also special offers; how does a translation of the No.1 Japanese best-seller *How to win at Super Mario Brothers* grab you? You may not need it, though, if - like Jason Burke of Allen, Texas - you're in the habit of clocking up scores of 9,999, 950...

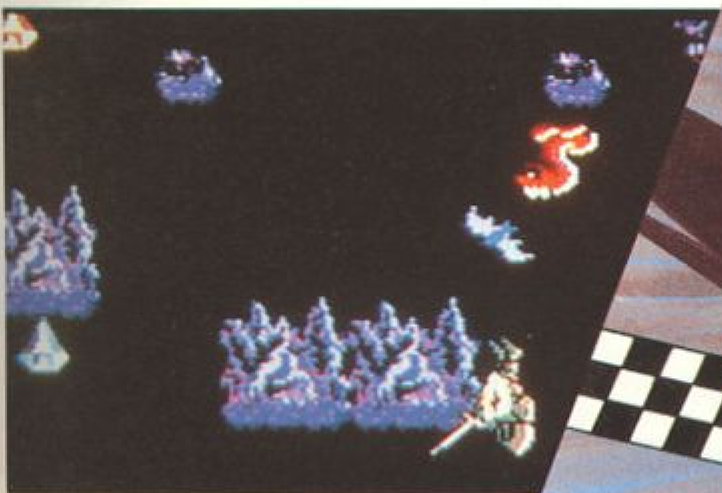


▶ PUNCH OUT

As you might expect, a game starring the fearsome Mike Tyson is likely to be pretty popular - *Mike Tyson's Punch Out* is number one in the US Nintendo charts. Here, the frightening (and, it seems, overgrown) champ lays in to his dwarfish opponent. Tyson hasn't got it all to himself in the boxing games stakes; Sugar Ray Leonard is sponsoring a rival product - from Data East - called *Ring King*. Now if Sugar Ray were to come out of retirement (again) to fight Tyson....



If there's something strongly reminiscent of classic Ultimate games in these graphics from *Wizards and Warriors*, it could be because it's produced by Rare - most of whom used to be with Ultimate



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SIMULATION STIMULATION

Simulations are big business in stateside software, where they're the adult game par excellence; SubLogic's *Flight Simulator* has been in the charts for as long as charts have existed. Microprose's *F-15* and *Gunship* have been consistent best-sellers, while EA's imminent *Interceptor* looks as though it will be a major contender.

And of course, there's more than airplanes: golf, helicopters, skateboarding, American Football...you name it, someone will simulate it (even down to an unpleasant little sawbones simulation called *The Surgeon*, complete with unzipped torsos and patient's screams).

Certainly the most successful flight simulator of this year has been *Falcon*, from Spectrum Holobyte, which added new realism to the genre and duly scooped umpteen of this year's Software Publishers Association awards. It's got such an authentic feel Spectrum Holobyte say 'the military is now looking at *Falcon* as 'a low-cost training device'.

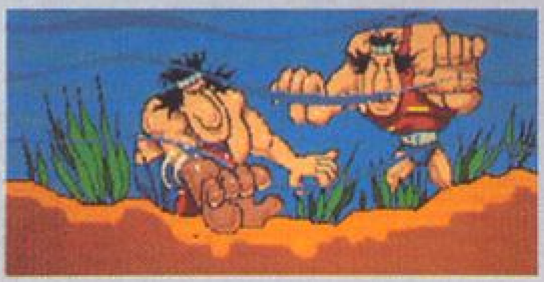
SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

'I was a teenage gamer', say Spectrum Holobyte's youthful Chief Executive Officer Gilman Louie, which goes some way towards explaining how he was able to program the Mac version of *Falcon*. Of course, it helps if you have high standards. 'We try to be high-end', he says. 'We write specifically to each machine, mainly in assembler. Unlike many people, we don't write a lot of C.'

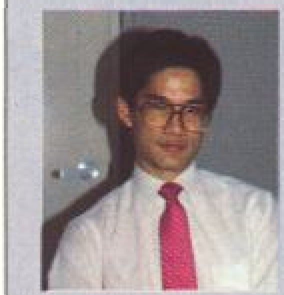
Simulations are Spectrum Holobyte's big earner; they started off with sub sim *Gato*, and now *Falcon* has sold over 50,000 copies on the PC and 30,000 on the Mac – which explains why those two machines are the ones they back with greatest resources. There will, though, be an Amiga version of *Falcon*, which Gilman says will be a test for the company of the piracy problem and will give them an idea of how they should support the machine in the future.

Apart from simulations the company deals in 'thinking games' and the role-playing field. They publish the Russian puzzler *Tetris* in the states, and have just released the RPG/adventure *Dondra* for the Apple II. This latter game is the first in the *Questmaster* series, and should be converted later this year for other machines.

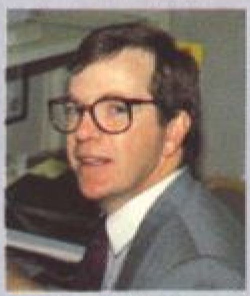
But the game that Spectrum Holobyte's President, Phil Adam, was most excited about, was a simulation; *Flight of the Intruder* is based on the A6 bommber flying in Vietnam, and is being designed to tie in with the forthcoming film of the same name. There will be more combat than in *Falcon;* Adams says it will be 'action, action, action' with 3D graphics, mountainous landscapes and behind-the-plane views. Should be available around Christmas of this year for PC, C64, Mac and possibly other machines.



Screens from the Apple IIGS version of *Dondra*



Gilman Louie, Spectrum Holobyte's CEO and programmer of *Falcon*.

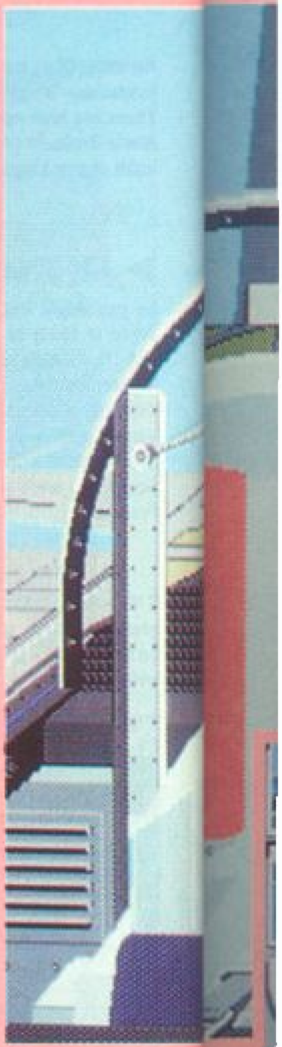


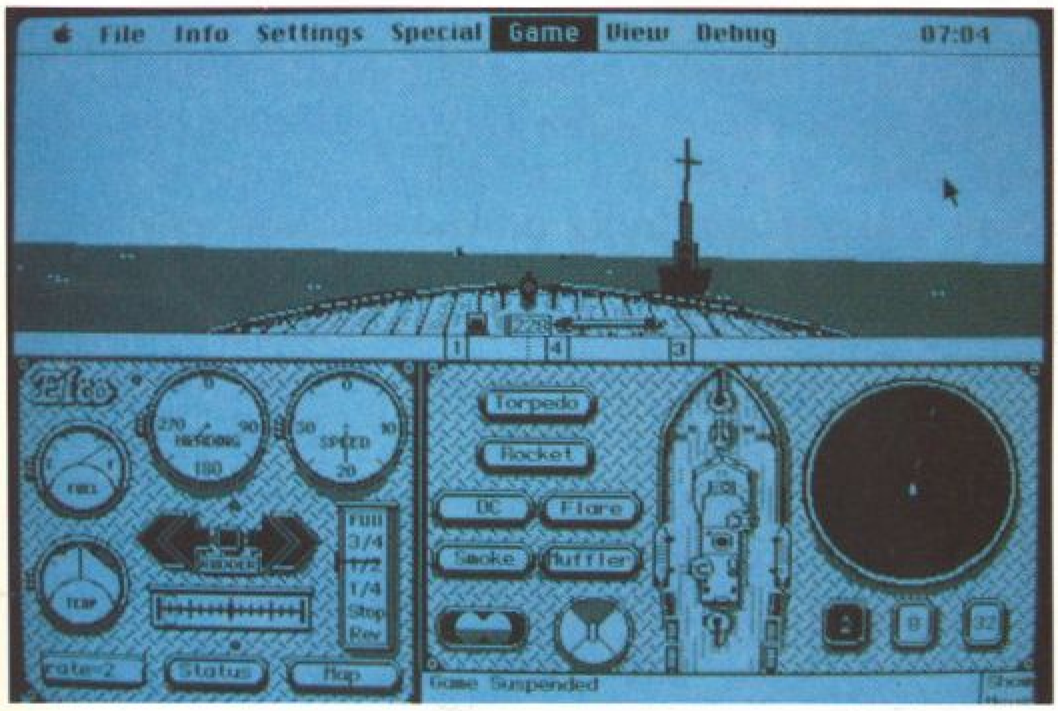
Spectrum Holobyte's President, Phil Adams

EGA ONLY

Falcon started on the Mac, and we've got a a review of the PC version in this month's Screen Test updates. But there's more to come; Spectrum Holobyte are now working on an EGA-only version of the game. The early demo on view had great filled, 3D graphics - enough to make any owner of a humble CGA PC instantly turn his thoughts to upgrading. The speed and graphics of this version surpass anything you're likely to see on an Amiga or ST.

It's a measure of the dominance of the IBM PC and its clones in the American market that Spectrum Holobyte should think it worth their while to produce a version for the top-of-the-range EGA 80286 machines. But there you have it; what to us is a very expensive machine indeed is no more than an average piece of kit in the States.





Front cockpit view; you're moving in for the kill on that enemy destroyer. Should you go side-on and launch a torpedo, or let him have it with the rockets and cannon?

PT-109

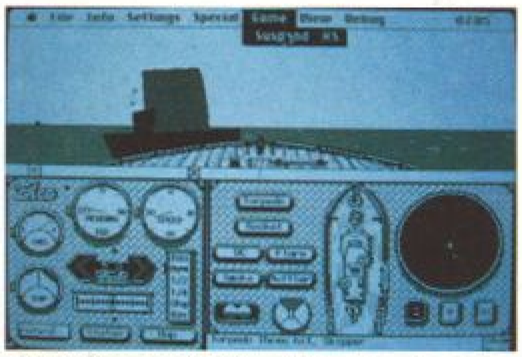
First there were flight sims and sport sims. Now it looks like boat sims are the coming thing. Spectrum Holobyte's latest effort is *PT-109*, a simulation with lots of combat, based on the US torpdeo patrol boat of WWII. This year is the 25th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and in the war JFK commanded – a PT-109...

The game puts you in command of a boat in the Pacific, where your task is to destroy as much enemy shipping as possible. There are several different missions, all based on events that actually took place between August 1943 and February 1945.

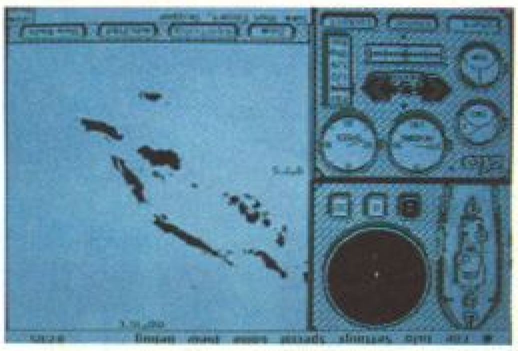
The game gives you a view that's the nautical equivalent of the HUD (Head Up Display) of *Falcon*; most of the time you'll be looking forward from the cockpit. but you can change your view through 360 degrees, change to a map view of the ares you're operating in, go to a status screen, and so on.

Your PT-109 is a mean machine; pound for pound, it was the most heavily armed ship of the war. You've got torpedoes, rockets, five sets of cannon, as well as mufflers and flares (for night missions). It's no surprise then, that *PT-109* is very much an action-orientated game; your objective on each mission is to sink as much enemy tonnage as possible.

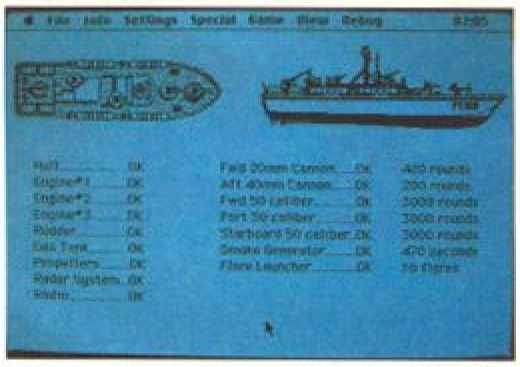
As such it's hugely enjoyable. While it has the look and feel of a classy simulation, the action is immediately involving and exciting (especially if you choose the Sitting Ducks training option –'a real morale booster, that one). The overall impression of a well-designed and executed package is enhanced by thorough and clear manual and the audible status reports your crew give out.



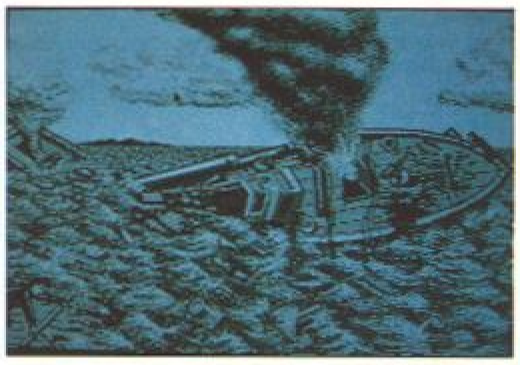
A hit! having successfully launched your torpedo you can enjoy the sight of the ship sinking into Davy Jones' locker.



Map screen: shows your route, and location of enemy vessels. You can zoom in and out to get more precise details.



Status screen: you're armed to the teeth and in perfect health - for the time being.



Oh dear! You've abanadoned ship, and things are not looking too good..

WHERE TO NOW?

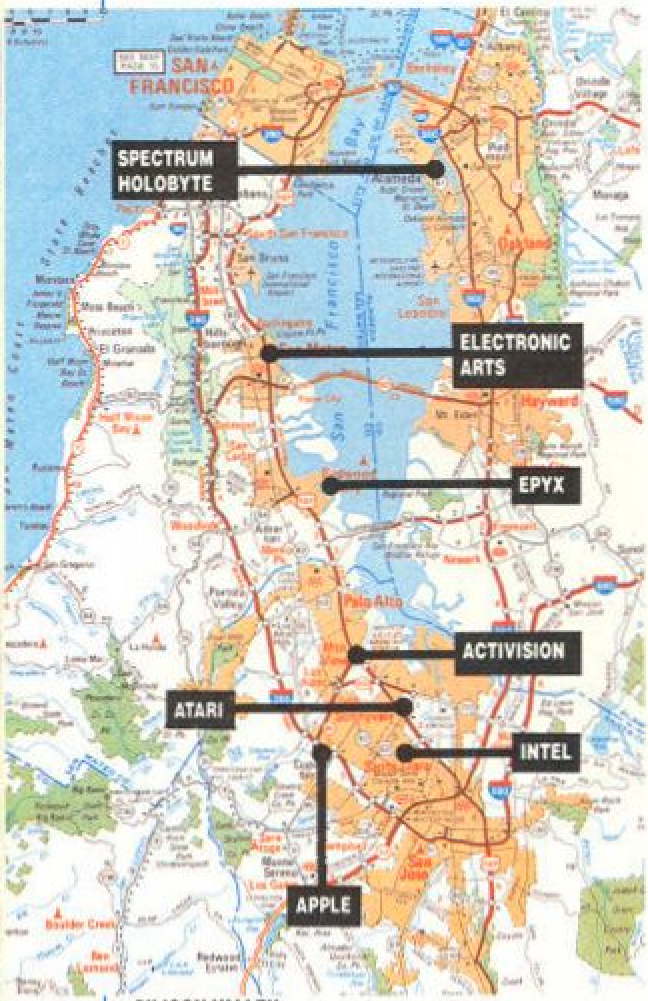
You might think that by now there's little more to do in the line of simulations. Well, you'd be wrong. Spectrum Holobyte believe there's still a lot of scope. At the moment they're working on multi-player versions of *Falcon*; two – or more – people can sit at Macs in different areas of an office and take each other on in the skies. And people will, of course, be able to play via modem.

Phil Adam of Spectrum Holobyte believes that 'people interacting with people is much better than people interacting with computers'. He hopes that it soon will be possible 'to integrate different games', so that you could fly in *Falcon* against a tank from completely different software – against someone who wasn't even in the same city. Eventually, he says, 'I'd like to be able to go be able to go up against one of Bill's (Wild Bill Stealey, of Microprose) products.' Now there's an interesting idea; *Falcon* versus *F-15 Strike Eagle*....

Greg Riker, head of EA's CD-I development team.

Compact Disc-Interactive is going to be the next big thing in home computer entertainment – at least, that's we've been led to believe over the past year. But who's actually doing research, when will see anything on the market, and what it will be like? Nowhere better to start getting some answers than in Silicon Valley, home of the micro chip and birthplace of the computer revolution.

CD-I – THE FUTURE OF GAMES?



SILICON VALLEY
The place gets its name because there are over 3,000 electronics firms in the small area around Highway 101, between San Francisco in the north and San Jose in the south. The map shows where just a few of the big players can be found.

And where better to start in Silicon Valley than at the World HQ of Electronic Arts, one of the biggest and best-known names in computer entertainment?

EA's head of CD-I Development is Greg Riker, an ex-sound engineer, ex-roadie, ex-hacker who, like so many other people in the home computer business, put in a spell at Atari in his earlier days.

'CD-I is the logical next step in home entertainment', says Greg. 'We're looking at something that will be like interactive television, that will take less suspension of disbelief. It will be relatively painless, have high payback and will be fun.' As far as EA are concerned, there's no 'no doubt that CD will be the medium that carries these experiences into the home.'

While Greg Riker believes that the full impact of CD-I will not be felt until the '90s, he's been busy on developing authoring tools with his team at EA. Using these tools and their own 'Demulator' (a combination of hardware and software) they've produced *Welcome to EA*, an interactive mystery story that gives some of the flavour of what CD-I could be like (see picture sequence for more details).

While EA have actually produced something, many other software houses feel the time is not yet ripe for commitment. As Dick Lehrberg, Vice President of Entertainment at Activision, says: 'Give me a hardware platform, and we'll produce some great stuff', implying

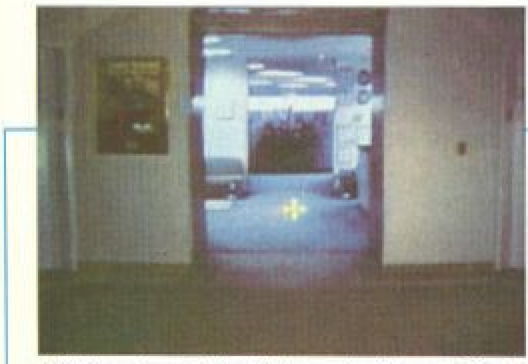
CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

Dick Lehrberg, Activision VP for Entertainmemt.

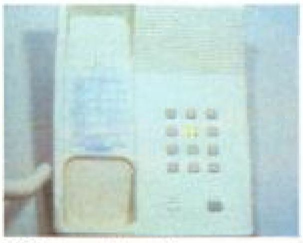
What is CD-I?

'The quality we've come to expect from digital audio – expanded to provide interactive experiences far more real than present computers can offer' is how Greg Riker sums up CD-I in a recent issue of EA's *Farther* magazine.

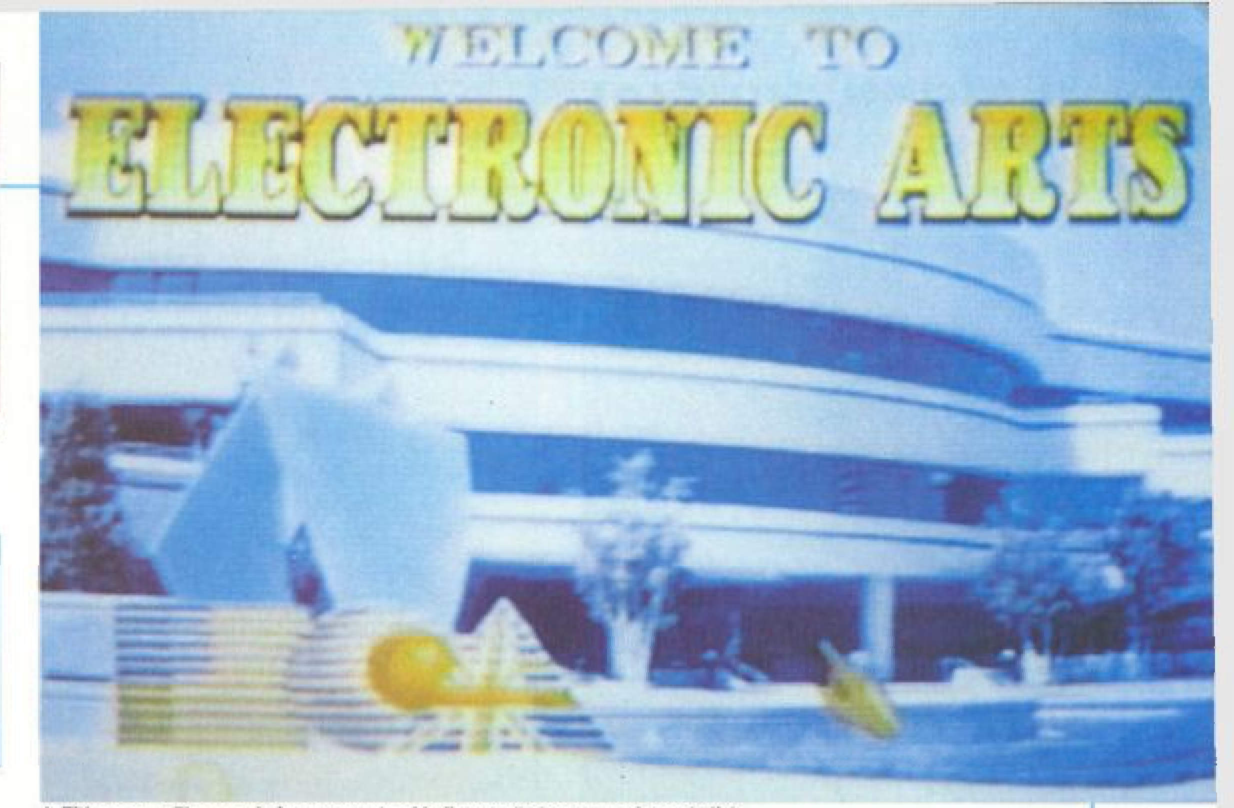
CDs can store around 600 megabytes of data; in a CD-I system this space would be used for digitsed photographs, sound and animation. Combine this storage capacity with more sophisticated input and artificial intelligence, and you've got a true interactive entertainment system, providing the ultimate in sound and picture quality – and a completely new experience in games.



2. In the entrance hall: which way should you go? You're not sure – until you hear the phone ring...

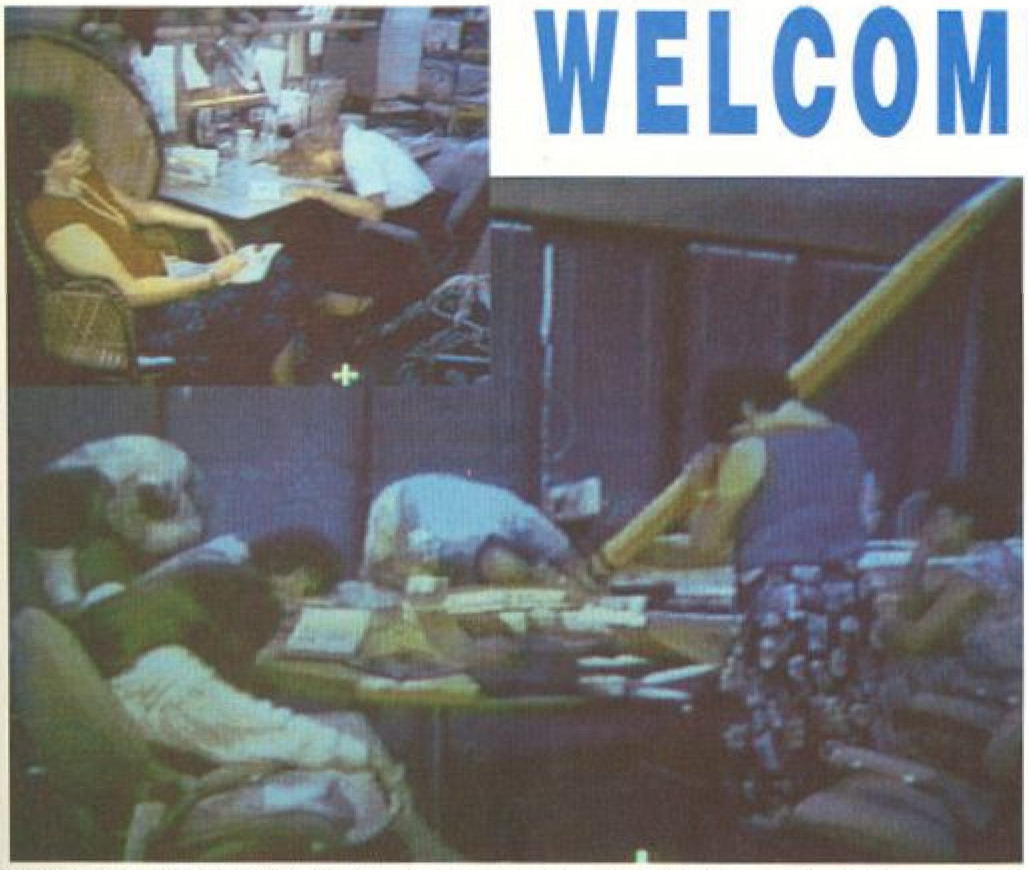


3. If you don't answer the phone, you're probably not going to get very far in the game since you won't hear Trip Hawkins' warning about the kidnap, the threat to the free world and the dangers to the future of CD-I as we know it..



1. Title screen. The crosshairs are your trackball-controlled cursor; point and click.

WELCOME TO EA



4.a & b Oh dear, oh dear! Something is dreadfully wrong around here; Californians are supposed to be laid-back, but this is taking things too far. And *what* has happened to that pencil?

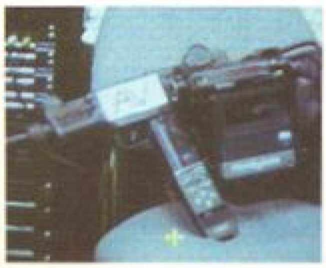
Greg Riker's team at EA has produced a 'fully interactive simulation' of CD-I, using their own hardware and software running off a 68000 processor.

The demo is an exploration/mystery game, which finds you in EA's Californian HQ attempting to rescue the kidnapped CD-I team; terrorists have threatened to turn them in to female androids (it's very Californian).

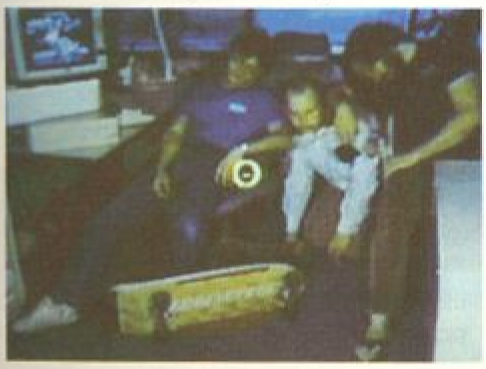
You play the game with a trackball which controls cursor on screen; clicking on objects or doors allows you to investigate or follow different routes. For example, the game begins with the phone ringing and a message from Trip Hawkins himself, telling you of the kidnap. It's then up to you to make the right choices in rescuing the team.

The pictures were created by recording the office on videotape, then digitizing the images and displaying them using 120 colours. The stereo includes soundtrack, speech and audio clues to let you know when you've found something important.

Greg Riker points out that *Welcome to EA* is a pretty simple demo; what the team has been more concerned to do is to get the Demulator hardware/software to the stage where serious development tools could be created. He says they're 'looking for ways to improve hardware through software.' The reason for creating sophisticated 'authoring tools' is that they make the application easier to develop – to the point where it isn't necessary to write any program code. ●

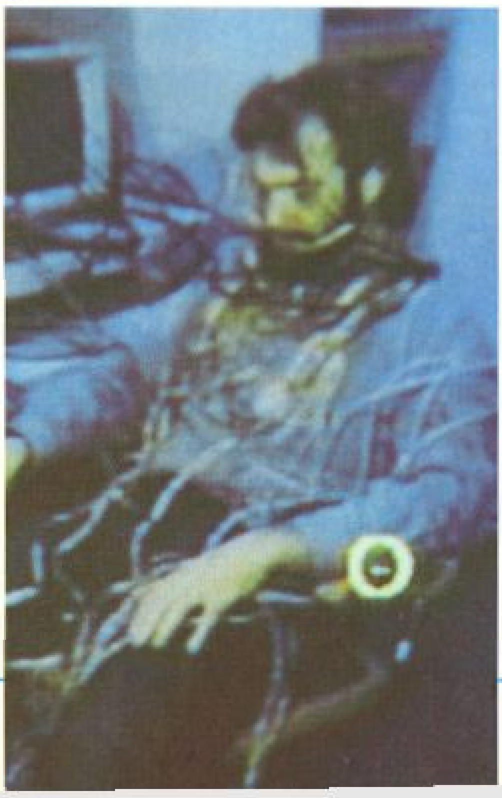


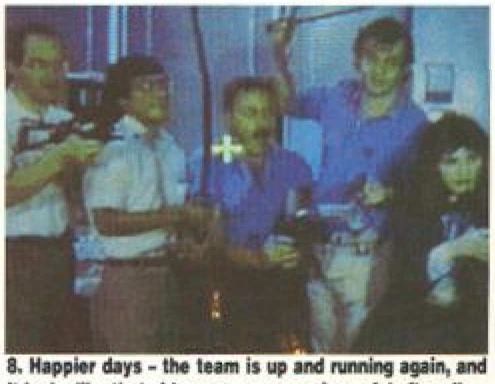
5. You find some video equipment. Is it a clue? Should you pick it up? Should you use it?



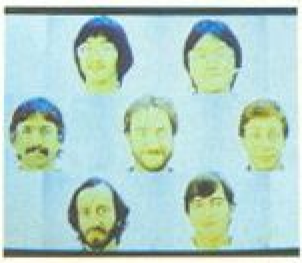
6. Further exploration reveals a totally zonked CD-I team. No skateboarding for them today.

7. And here's another one (is it Riker himself?) sadistically bound by the terrorists.





8. Happier days – the team is up and running again, and it looks like that video camera came in useful after all.



9. Game over and mission accomplished – click on those faces and they'll go through an amusing routine of contortions. Riker's in the middle.

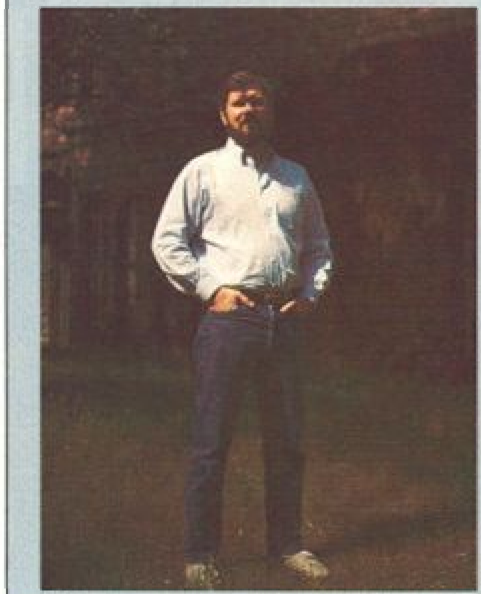
Trip Hawkins, EA's President.

Demulator II

The Demulator, EA's CD-I development tool.

BUT IS IT FUN ENOUGH?

Although Lucasfilms haven't got anything underway at the moment Stephen Arnold, the Games unit's manager, feels that 'there is a gap in the market for an entertainment "appliance", sophisticated but relatively easy to use – it could be CD-I, if CD-I delivers the promise of entertainment value. The basic question is "Is it fun enough?" You won't get away with less than compelling gameplay more than once.' Game designer David Fox adds that 'CD-I is going to be the equivalent of making a small movie.' That ought to be something Lucasfilms could do pretty well.



Stephen Arnold, of Lucasfilms Games, in the grounds of the company's rural Californian HQ.

that the standards and the necessary affordable consumer equipment just aren't there yet.

But Lehrberg does promise 'something in a year', and points to Activision's current Hyperware as an example of how interactivity works: in *Business Class*, for instance, you click on countries to get information; with CD-I that information could include digitised photos so detailed that you could orientate yourself in the city without even going there.

A NEW HOLLYWOOD?

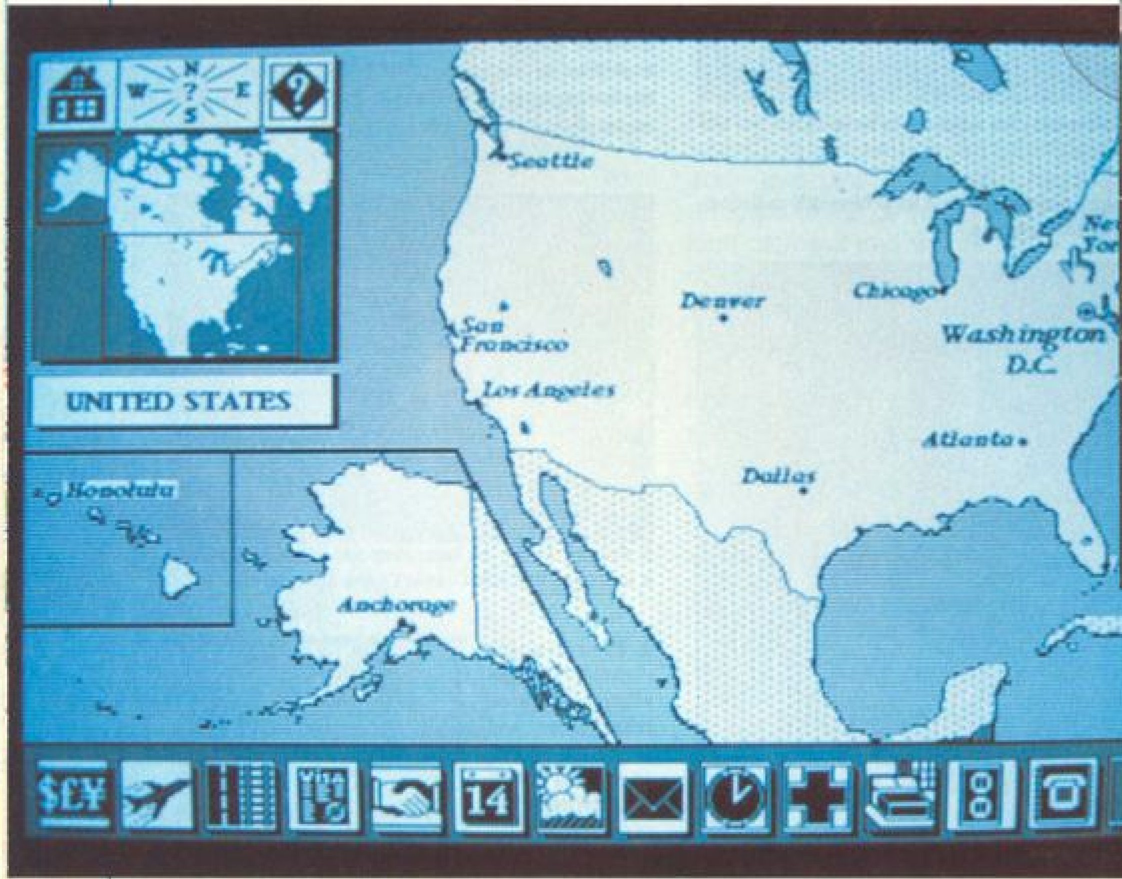
One thing a lot of people would like to see on CD-I is Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon*. Imagine the realistic simulation with access to a diskful of photographic-quality images and digitised sound effects...

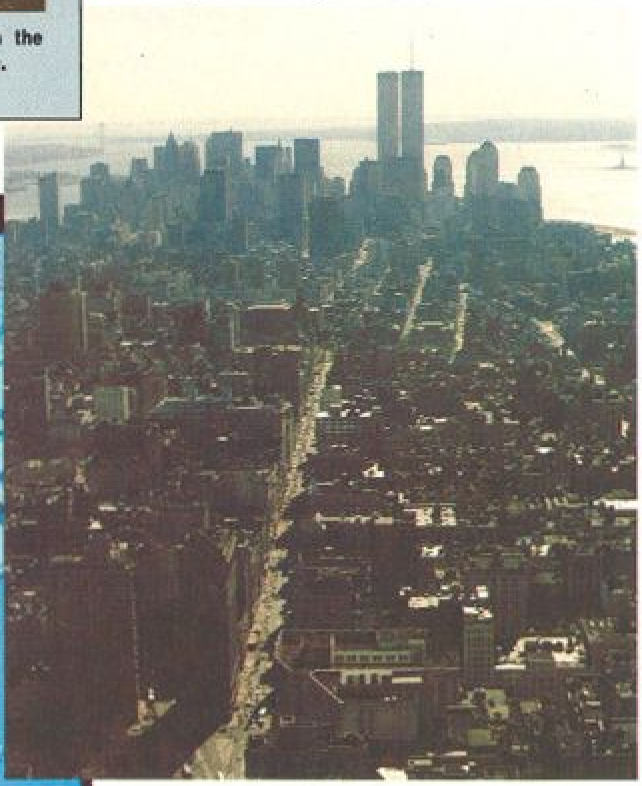
Unfortunately, it won't be this year. Gilman Louie sees CD-I as being in its very early days, and does not think much will be produced until after the next CD-ROM conference. 'You have to think of it as a completely new medium,' he says. 'It will be a totally unique experience.'

Gilman Louie likens the birth of CD-I to 'the early days of the cinema', a view SH's President, Phil Adams, seems to share when he predicts that in 'seven or eight years there will be a massive shakeout in the industry. Costs will rocket, games will become multi-million dollar productions. Only a few major players will be left.'

EA's President Trip Hawkins: 'making software is getting more like making the movies', he says, as the three areas which have hitherto been separate – home video, coin-ops and casettes – start to merge. And he's quite forthright in his desire to 'build a new Hollywood'.

What Trip Hawkins wants to see in CD-I is 'more interesting stories, so that you have a dynamic audio-visual experience with no distractions – you're just conscious of the experience itself.' It's the interactivity itself that appeals to him; TV, he believes, is too passive, a 'narcotic, a terrible addiction we can't give up.' With CD-I and high density TV we could see that grip broken. ●





Business Class – not very exciting as it is, but with CD-I you could click on New York, zoom in to the Empire State Building and then see this tremendous view on your computer monitor.

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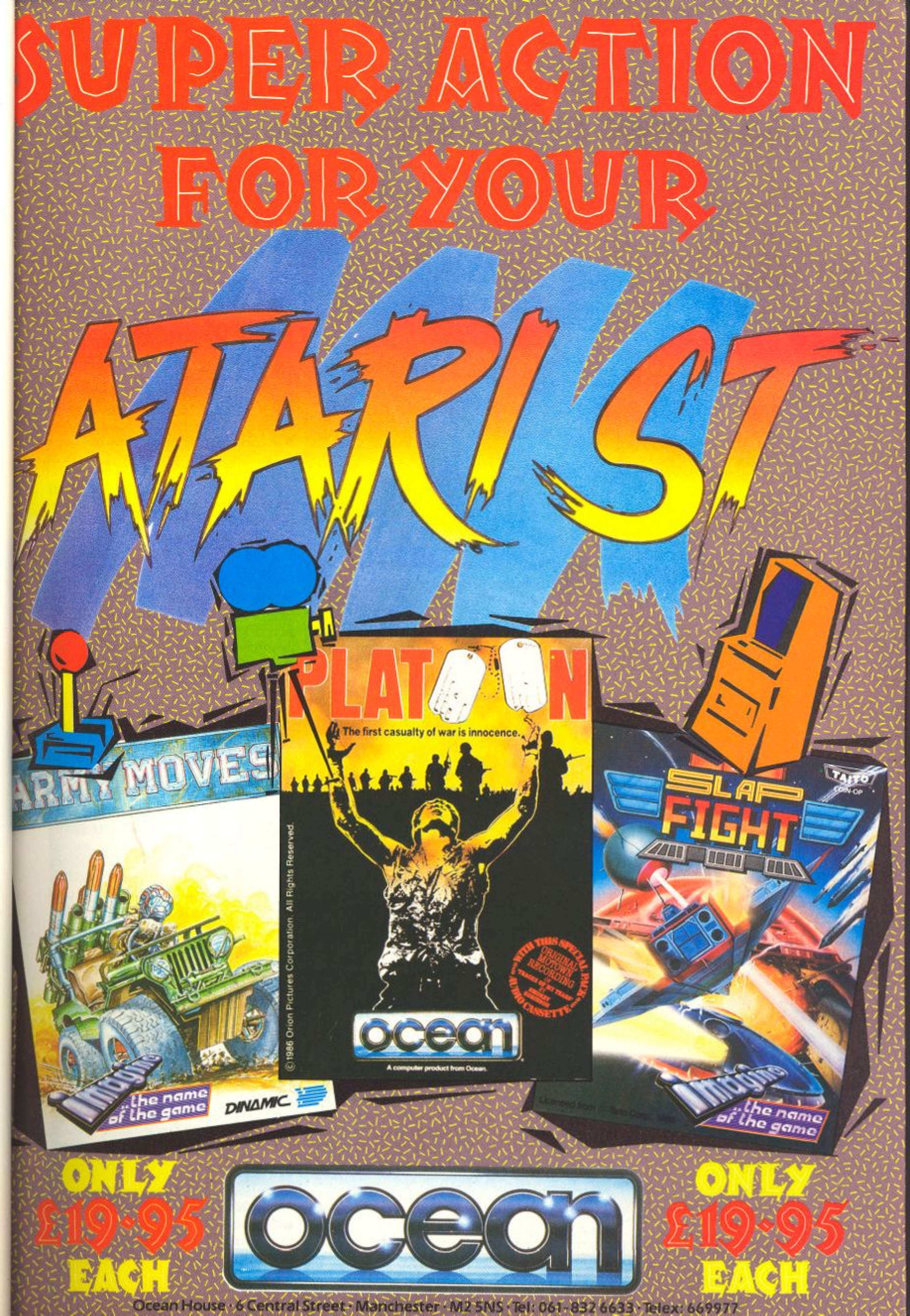
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AIR WARRIOR

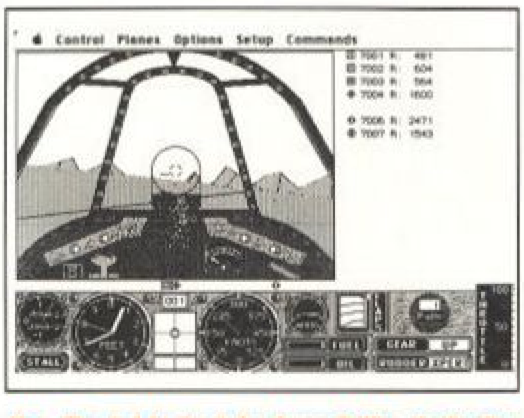
Remember the Game of the Future special we brought you in ACE Issue 4? When we suggested that arcade-style games played down a phone line might soon be available we hardly thought they'd turn up this soon, but already gamers in the United States can dial up a real-time multi-player combat flight simulator.

The game is called *Air Warrior*, and it was created by the Kesmai Corporation of Virginia for General Electric's online service GEnie. Subscribers to GEnie can log onto the system from anywhere in the United States and fight each other over the skies of three mythical countries. They can form squadrons, team up to crew bombers or just fly out as lone fighter pilots. They can chat to other players in 'briefing rooms' – rather like locations in an adventure game – or, once airborne, exchange 'radio' messages.

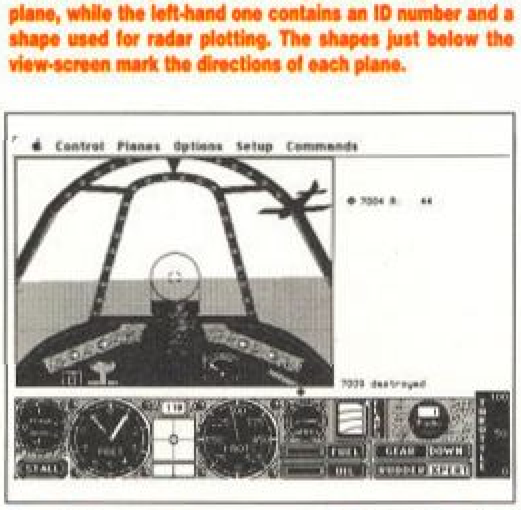
Where conventional multi-user games (MUGs for short) like *MUD* or Micronet's *Shades* can only portray their game-worlds using text messages, *Air Warrior* gives you all the animated 3D graphics and sound you'd expect from any single-player flight sim. It can do this because it's arranged in a completely different way to normal MUGs.

You can play a text-based game like *MUD* or *Shades* using standard comms software designed for accessing online information or sending electronic mail. Your computer's only task is to send the text you type to the host – the mini or mainframe belonging to the people running the game – and to display any messages the host sends back. You know you're playing a game, the host knows you're playing a game but as far as the terminal (your computer) is concerned all that text going backwards and forwards could be anything.

You could try the same sort of process with a flight simulator with the host sending screens of graphics down the phone to your computer, but this would be terribly slow – a typical ST screen would take several minutes to transfer at normal comms speeds – so *Air Warrior* takes a different approach. Instead of using normal comms software, you use a special program that's a comms package and flight simulator rolled into one.



Mac – The straight-ahead view from a Spitfire, shortly after take-off. Those figures down the side represent aircraft flown by other players - who could be almost anywhere in America! The right-hand column gives the range of each plane, while the left-hand one contains an ID number and a shape used for radar plotting. The shapes just below the view-screen mark the directions of each plane.



Mac – You're zooming up on an enemy fighter, a Focke-Wulf FW190 if the tail shape is anything to go by. Remember, there's a real, determined and very dangerous human being flying that plane!

This program – the terminal program – creates the graphics you see on-screen the same way a normal game does, but using information from the host on the behaviour of other planes. It also sends information out, telling the host what you're doing with your controls, throttle and so on. The host can then package this information up and send it out to other users so that you can appear on their screens.

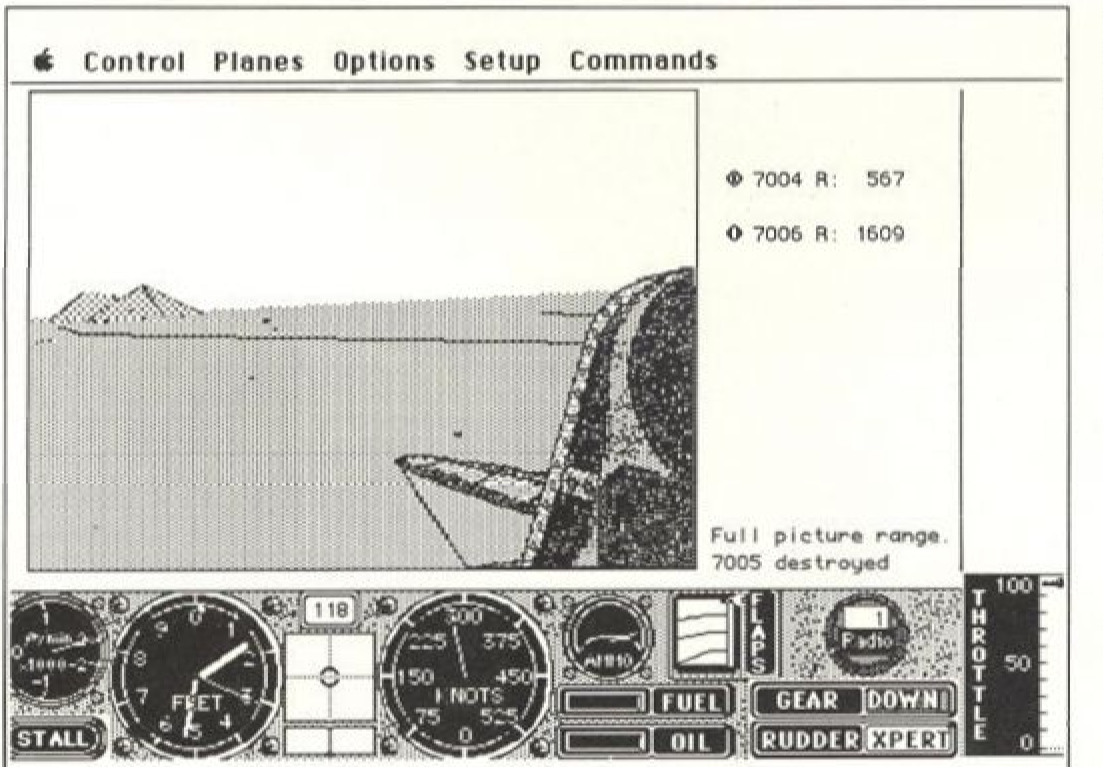
Because the terminal does almost all the work, it has to be pretty much a game in itself. Indeed, the *Air Warrior* terminal software has an offline practice mode where you can learn to fly before you connect to the system. The solid 3D flight simulator you get when you pick offline mode is impressive enough on a Macintosh – the original *Air Warrior* terminal machine – but forthcoming Amiga, ST and PC versions should really end up looking very striking. Custom art file facilities in the terminal software let you download fancy cockpit interiors from the *Air Warrior* host database, bringing your surroundings well up to the standard of top Macintosh flight sim *Falcon* – or you can design your own if you're feeling fancy. Also on the host database are a whole load of hints-and-tips articles for the game, if you think your tactics need a little work.

WHY MULTI-PLAYER GAMES ARE BEST

Most single-player combat games are ego boosters. Things are carefully set up so that the player is smarter than the oppposition. You can take on literally dozens of bad guys at once, wipe them all out and still keep going. There's no lasting satisfaction in wrecking an entire alien space-fleet in a game like that, because the whole thing was designed to let you. There's plenty of short-term, mindless fun to be had of course, but really it's just like shooting fish in a barrel.

That's not to say that single-player games can't be challenging, but at best you're up against the 'dead hand' of the programmer in the form of puzzles, intricate sprite behaviour patterns or the like – and you can generally learn ways round this sort of thing. Usually even this much effort just isn't necessary: the game's got no brains or cunning so you'll only be defeated by speed, power or sheer weight of numbers on the part of the bad guys.

Once things go multi-player, you get to see the other side of the coin. In a game where you can be the hunted just as easily as the hunter, running like hell is often the best tactic. In his 'Air Warrior Survival Tips',



7004 R: 567

7006 R: 1609

Full picture range.
7005 destroyed

Mac – A quick look over your right shoulder shows that FW 190 you just flew past, now far below and behind you.

experienced online pilot Cap'n Trips writes The first thing you need to realise about aerial combat is that the main objective is to survive. Shooting down enemies is just icing on the cake.' Fellow modem-flier DB recounts in his 'Beginner's Bible' how he was shot down more than 30 times before his first kill. How many single-player games could do that to you and still have you coming back for more?

Clearly, online gameplay is very different from its single-player equivalent – more challenging, more intense and potentially a good deal more interesting – but there's another important point to note about online gaming: it's more expensive too. An average or good single-player game should cost a good deal less than £1 per hour of entertainment – you'd expect more than 20 hours of playing time from a £20 game before you got bored with it, wouldn't you? – putting it in the same sort of bracket as a local cinema ticket, hired video or pulp paperback. Leaving modem costs to one side, an hour playing an online game in the UK is probably going to cost more like £2-3 including call charges. This puts it more on a par with coin-ops, making it something of a luxury entertainment.

There's another similarity with coin-ops of course. An online game like *Air Warrior* leaves you visible: although you fly under an assumed name, people can still watch you bite the dust ignominiously when you foul up. Won't you be embarassed making beginners' errors so publicly? Well possibly, but the offline practice mode and online information area on *Air Warrior* make it easy for learner pilots to hone their skills before playing the full-blown game.

One thing's for sure: US gamers are taking to the game in their droves, joining GEnie and possibly even buying modems just so they can play it. Let's hope it – or something similar – reaches Britain soon!

AMERICAN GRAPHICS

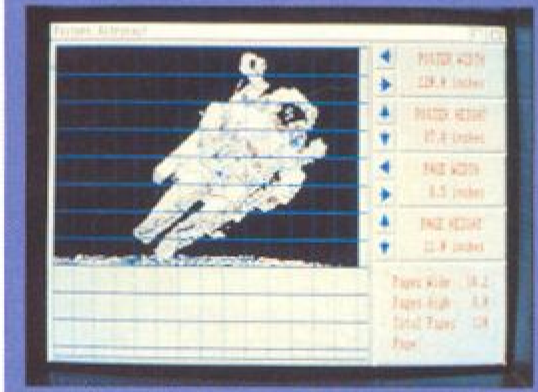
A WHISTLESTOP TOUR OF THE US GRAPHICS SCENE.

DELUXE PHOTO LAB

Photo Lab is the latest in EA's highly successful Deluxe series of graphics programs. This one really does seem to be a bit special, as EA Assistant Producer Tom Casey explained.

Photo Lab has three distinct modules, all using a *D Paint*-style interface. The first is a paint program, using all the Amiga's modes, including Hold And Modify and Extra Half Bright. It also allows you to work with images larger than than the screen.

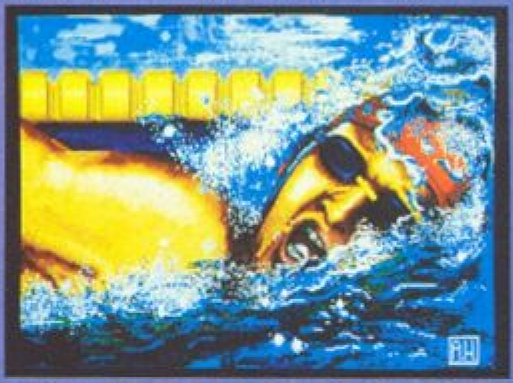
Tom Casey poses with Deluxe Photo Lab



Poster creation in *Deluxe Photo Lab*: the Astronaut image is overlaid on the grid, the size is specified. It's going to take 120 pages of paper to print him out....

The second part is all about colour Image Processing and allows you to convert from any graphics mode to any other. The final segment is a poster-production program, which lets you create enormous posters and output them to virtually any printer. You place your image on a grid, each segment of which represents one sheet of paper, specify the size and off you go. Be warned that large colour poster can take some time to print.

Deluxe Photo Lab should be available in June; we'll be bringing you a full review as soon as its finished.



Swimmer – another example of *Deluxe Paint II* demonstrating the IBM's creative power.

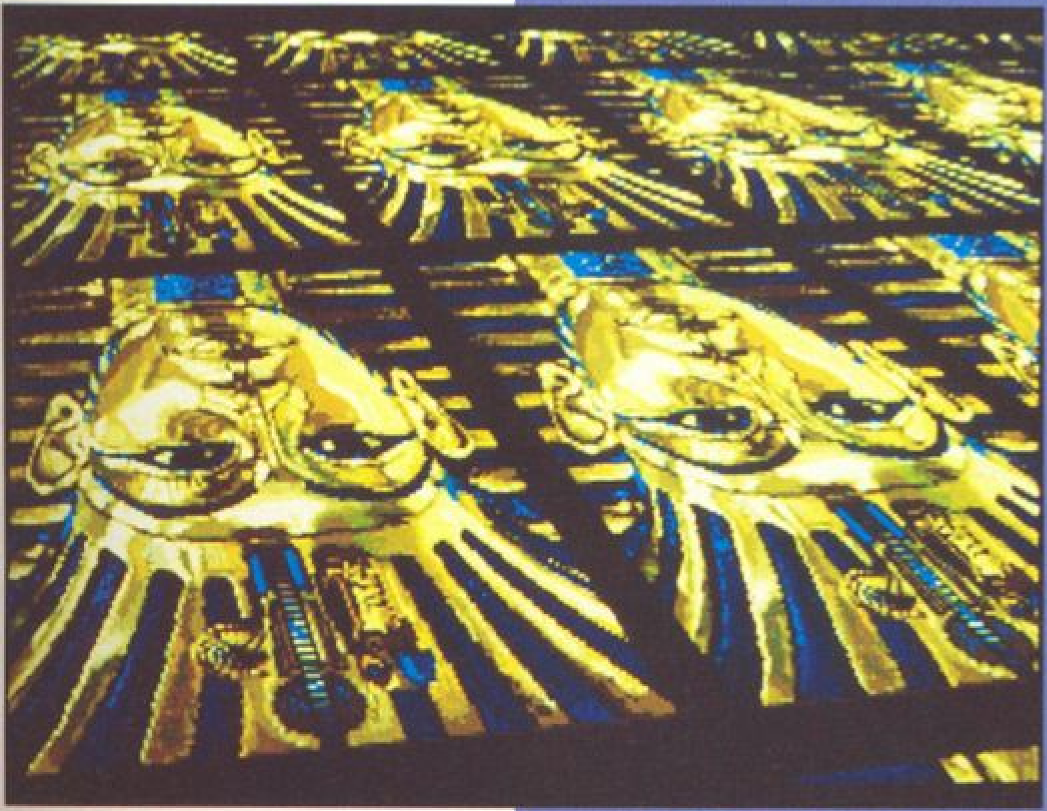
DELUXE PAINT II IBM

The pre-eminent paint program is every bit as classy on the IBM as it was on the Amiga. It supports CGA, EGA, VGA and MCGA graphics cards – thus making it compatible with IBM's new PS/2 range of micros and allowing it to use a 256-colour palette. EA claim it's got 'everything the Amiga has' and the results are certainly very impressive.

COMPUTER ARTS INSTITUTE

If you just wanted to go out and learn how to do computer art, where would you go? Hard to think of somewhere you could go along to, pay your money, and tke your course – in this country, at least. But not in San Francisco; there, you could stroll down to the Computer Arts Institute, enroll and get to grips with half a million dollars' worth of computer graphcis equipment.

The Institute ws started by Rodney Stock, an ex-Lucasfilms boffin who worked on the design of the Pixar graphics system. A full four month course costs around $3600, and if that sounds expensive bear in mind that most students find gainful employment in the computer graphics field once their courses are finished.



Everyone must be familiar with the *D Paint* picture of King Tut – but this is probably the first time you've seen him produced on PC.

An example of the stuff you can do on the Institute's fancy equipment.

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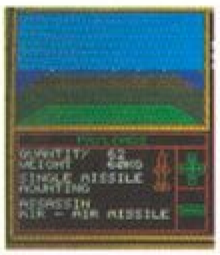

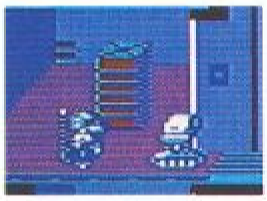

Power games are go! Two of our ACE Rated games this month are the kind of gripping, sophisticated product we've been demanding for a long time. Both *Carrier Command* and *Conqueror* feature deep strategy, exciting action and state-of-the-art filled 3D graphics. And don't despair of other versions – Activision have snapped up Amiga and ST rights to *Conqueror*. Our two other ACE Rated games are brilliant puzzlers; *Deflektor* on the ST is every bit as good (and perplexing) as its 8-bit predecessors, while *Spidertronic* displays all the flair we're coming to expect from the French. Elsewhere, check out the long-awaited *Impossible Mission 2*. Plenty of attractive Update news this month, too, with the PC version of ace flight sim *Falcon* really dishing up the goods.

THE RATINGS

HOW they're calculated...

If you buy a game, how much enjoyment will you get out of it, and for how long? Just check out our revolutionary PIC (Predicted Interest Curve) for the full story. Brilliant arcade games start high on the curve, and then steadily tail off as you lose interest; powerful puzzle games may ride the crest of the curve for months – but the moment you solve them they'll come tumbling down; complex strategy games may stump you at first – but climb up the scale as you begin to appreciate the scope of the gameplay. And as for the turkeys – they start low, stay low, and have nowhere to go but down, down, down.

Once you've seen how long the game can hold your attention, all you need to glance at is the renowned ACE RATING. This is calculated according to the area under the PIC. The bigger it is, the better the game. Add to that our definitive ratings for IQ Factor (will it give your brain cells a work-out?) and Fun Factor – a measure of instant appeal and exhilaration as you dive into the game. And, of course, we rate the Graphics and Audio effects too...for EVERY machine the game's available on.

WHY you can rely on them...

The ACE reviewing team covers a broad spectrum of computer entertainment talent. Andy Wilton knows more about 68000 op codes than many a commercial programmer – but he can also beat the pants off the opposition in *Oids*. Andy Smith doesn't know an op code from an alien, but his years of game-playing experience enable him to pass definitive judgement on anything from sims to shoot-em-ups. Add Steve Cooke (ex-Personal Computer Games and formerly columnist for magazines ranging from Zzap!64 to Your Sinclair) and Pete Connor (ex-Amstrad Action, Personal Computer Games, and Your Computer reviewer) and you've got age and experience as well as youthful enthusiasm.

Every game on the following pages has been seen by all of us. We compare notes, express differing opinions, and only then do we decide who's to take final responsibility for getting our views into print. What follows, then, isn't just a collection of casual comments, but the definitive ACE verdict on this month's software. We've checked it out – now you can too.

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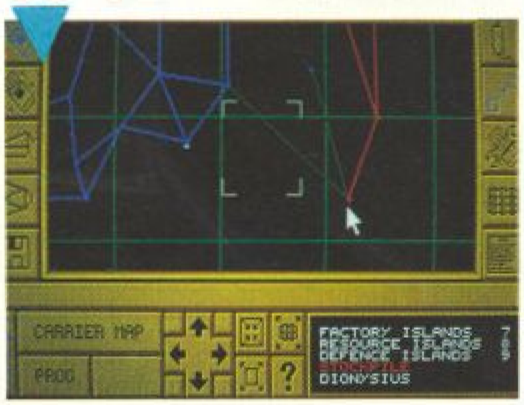

CARRIER MAP
PROD
FACTORY ISLANDS
RESOURCE ISLANDS
DEFENCE ISLANDS
STOCKPILE
DIONYSIUS

"Commander, Thermopylae reports an attack on the island has been repulsed.

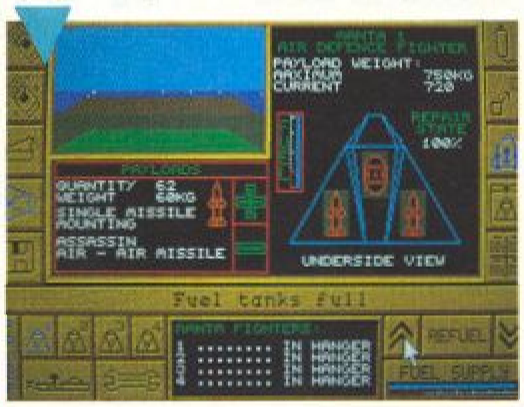
Good. Get me the network on visual.

Network on visual sir.

O.K. transfer the stockpile to Dionysius... pull in the drones and proceed at full speed to Charibdis. The sooner we can bring Medusa island into the network, the better.

Stockpile is being transferred... course is now set for Charibdis... autopilot engaged."

09 45 ACC EPSILON

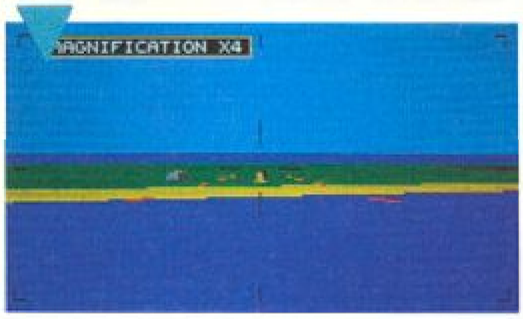

MANTA 1
AIR DEFENCE FIGHTER
PAYLOAD WEIGHT:
MAXIMUM 750KG
CURRENT 720
REPAIR STATE
100%
PAYLOADS
QUANTITY 62
WEIGHT 60KG
SINGLE MISSILE MOUNTING
ASSASSIN
AIR - AIR MISSILE
UNDERSIDE VIEW
Fuel tanks full
MANTA FIGHTERS
1 IN HANGER
2 IN HANGER
3 IN HANGER
4 IN HANGER
REFUEL
FUEL SUPPLY

"Sir, damage control reports Mantas 4 and 3 now 48 percent operational...

O.K. have Manta 2 fitted with a Quaker fragmentating bomb and two Assasins... If Charibdis is a defence island we'd better be prepared... fit Manta 1 with a Quasar laser...

Mantas 2 and 1 are now refuelled and are being equipped..."

10 12 ACC EPSILON


MAGNIFICATION X4

"Sir, Epsilon has reached destination point and is now in range of Charibdis.

Deploy drones 1 to 4, bow gamma pattern...observation turret, scan the island and report.

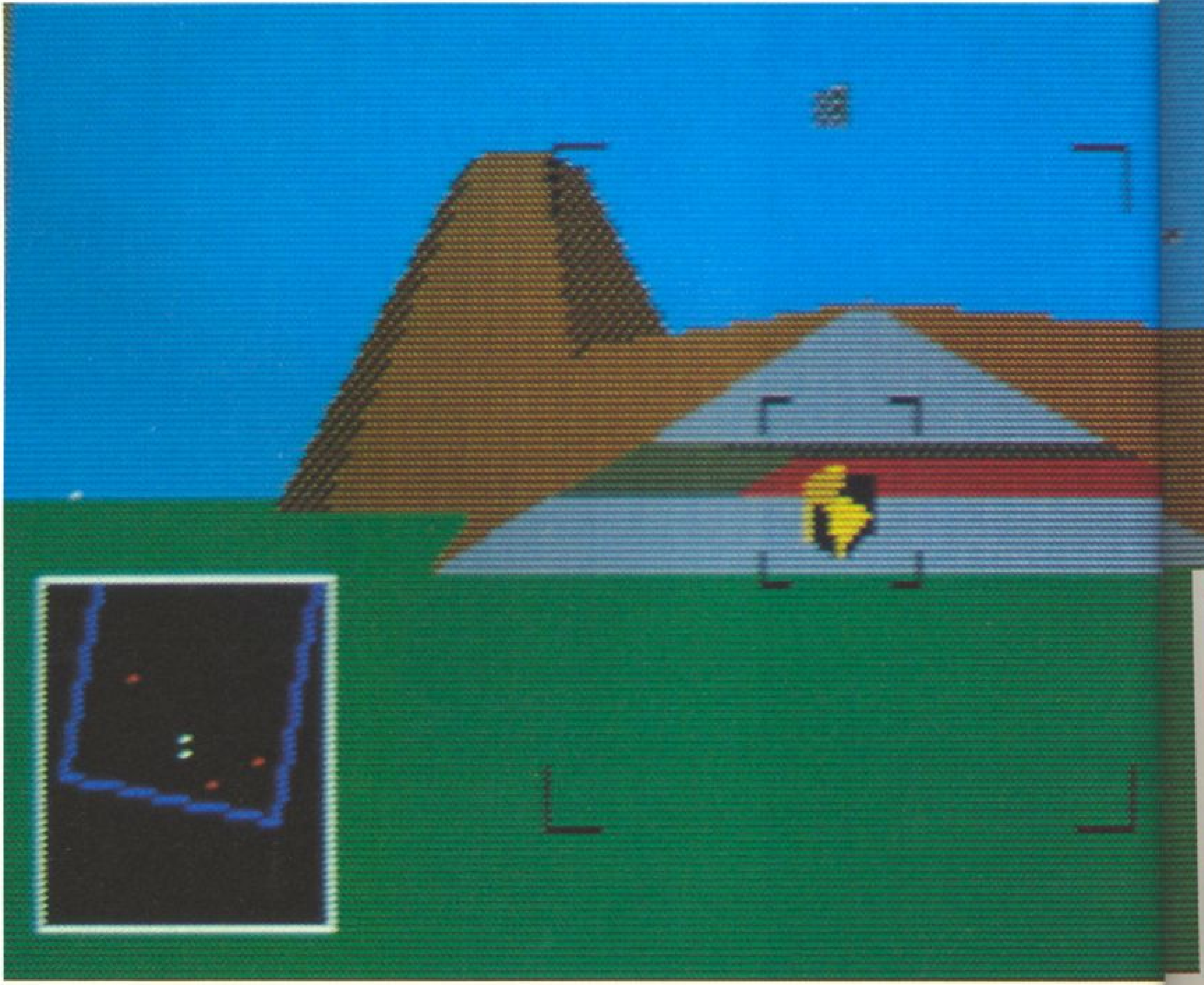
Drones 1 to 4 deployed, bow gamma pattern... observation reports Charibdis a resource island... one missile launcher in range.

Destroy missile launcher with laser cannon... get Manta 1 on deck.

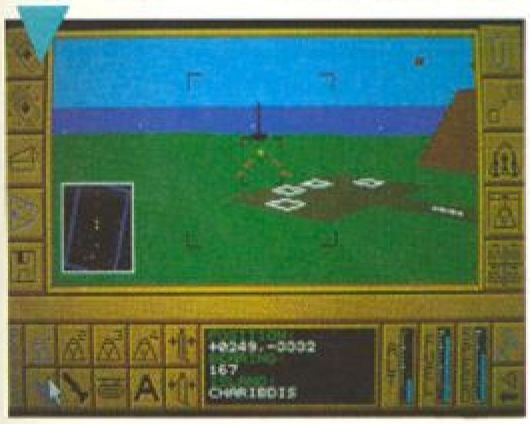
Observation reports missile launcher destroyed by laser cannon... Manta 1 is in lift... Manta 1 now on deck and ready for launch...

Launch Manta 1

Manta 1 gone"



10 15 ACC EPSILON



"Manta 1 is circling sir,

Manta 1 engage radar... go in low and fast and take out remaining missile launchers... put Manta 1's telemetry on visual.

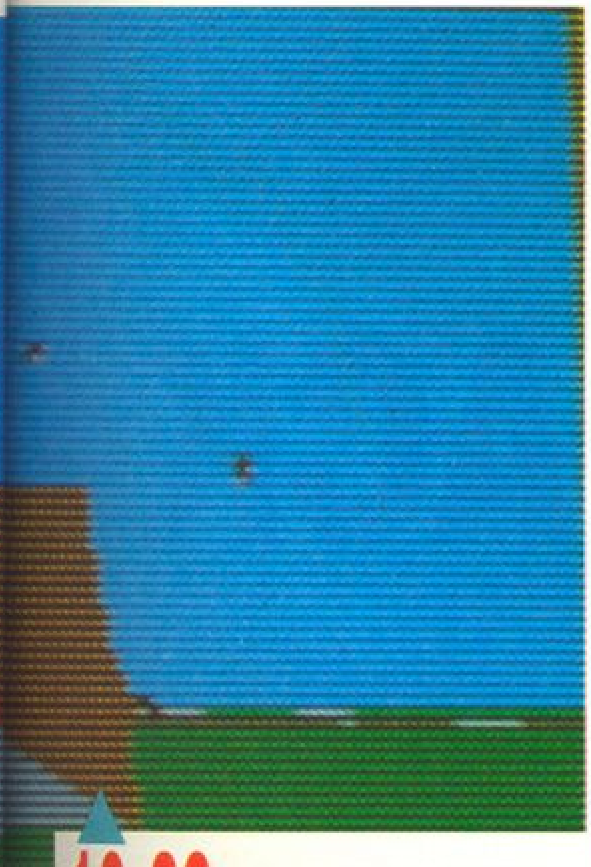
Manta 1 on screen... preparing to make run...

Be careful not to damage that oil rig Manta 1...

Bring her in on autopilot.

Manta 1 is in range and will come in on autopilot.

Prepare Walrus 1 with virus bomb... and launch her as soon as she's ready."



10 26 ACC EPSILON

"Walrus 1 launched.

Take her to just outside the command centre.

Walrus 1 course set... autopilot engaged... Walrus 1 has encountered a beach, and is continuing... Walrus 1 has arrived at destination.

O.K. put Walrus 1's telemetry on visual... now position her 50m from the command centre's mouth... O.K., fire virus bomb.

Bomb gone... Charibdis is now a friendly island sir.

O.K. bring Walrus 1 in. As soon as she has docked pull in the drones and proceed at full speed for Dionysius.

CARRIER COMMAND

RAINBIRD'S golden voyage

STRATEGY and arcade games don't often mix this well without some sacrifice being made in either the graphics or the gameplay (or both). But *Carrier Command* manages to combine the two game styles effectively without any apparent loss.

927
ACE RATED

The game is set on board the aircraft carrier Epsilon, of which the player is the commander. The ACC Epsilon is one of a pair of carriers on station in the Southern Ocean, where a series of volcanic islands have recently emerged. The ACC's are equipped specifically to 'populate' these islands in the hope of trapping and using the volcanic energy. The other ACC, The Omega, is now, unfortunately, in the hands of a terrorist organisation who are aiming to use the carrier to capture and then destroy all the islands. As commander of the Epsilon, it's up to you to ensure this doesn't happen.

Strategic planning plays a strong part in the game as the player has to ensure he always has enough fuel and equipment to complete the task. This is achieved by building a network of islands. An island can, upon capture, be turned into either a resource island where raw materials will be mined, a factory island where raw materials are refined into useable products, or a defence island which will secure itself from enemy attack. Once an island has been secured, you can drop an ACCB pod, a device which will start to build installations on the island according to the type dropped. The main problem for the player is to maintain a network between all the islands in your control so that raw materials can be mined and turned into something you need (fuel, new aircraft, munitions etc) which can then be shipped a specific island to await collection. It's only from this designated stockpile island that the player can replenish supplies, including fuel, so that a great deal of thought has to go into choosing a location for the stockpile.

The arcade-style action is provided by the Manta aircraft and Walrus amphibious tanks which can be directly controlled by the player during a conflict. Assuming direct control of a Manta or Walrus craft gives the player a cockpit view of the action, with joystick and mouse controlling the craft directly. Sending in a Manta or a Walrus to destroy hostile installations is not always strictly necessary but it can save the time and effort involved in manoeuvring the carrier into a suitable firing position. Besides which, it provides the player with a satisfying break from all that planning and scheming.

Carrier Command includes two scenarios. The strategy game has the two carriers starting at opposite ends of the island archipelago trying to capture as many islands as possible, while the action game puts the player halfway into the game, with each carrier already having an established resource network. Whichever scenario you choose, you'll find the game enthralling and a treat to play.

● Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£14.95cs, £19.95dk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£14.95cs, £15.95dk	IMMINENT

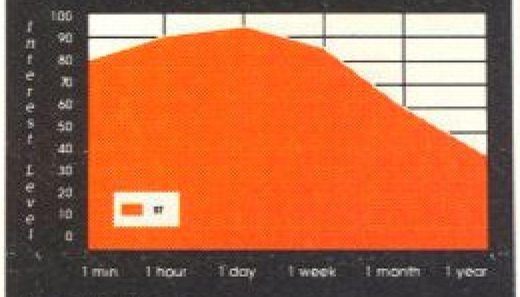
ATARI ST VERSION

The filled 3D graphics are superb, and the (few) sound effects are pleasant enough, but what really makes the game special is the amount of thought that has gone into it. Attention has been paid to every detail and the whole game structure hangs together well. Even the real time icon selection method works satisfactorily.

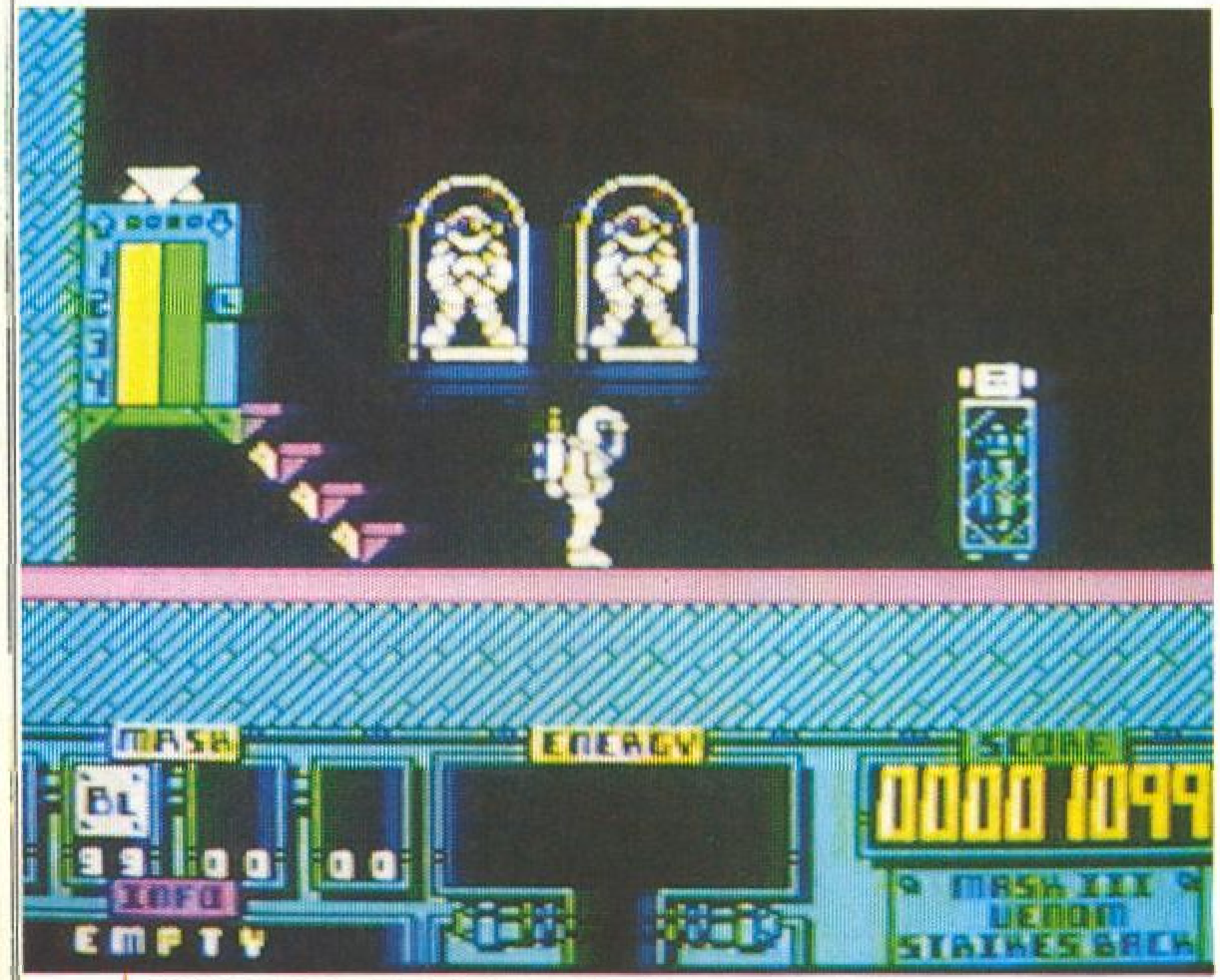
GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 927

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Gripping from the word go



SPECTRUM – **Matt Tracker, using the Backlash mask, blasts his way through Venom's defences.**

SPECTRUM VERSION

Graphics and sound are, again, excellent. The layout differs slightly from other versions, but the object is the same and the game plays in the same way. A frustrating point, though, is that you get only one life; you die much more quickly than you do with the Commodore's three.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 660

AMSTRAD VERSION

Almost identical to the Spectrum, although the graphics are a little sharper. Again, the fact that you have only one life can be a trifle tedious.

GRAPHICS	**7**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 660

RELEASE BOX

AMS	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC	£7.99cs, £12.99dk	OUT NOW

VENOM STRIKES BACK

More vicious, nasty gameplay from GREMLIN

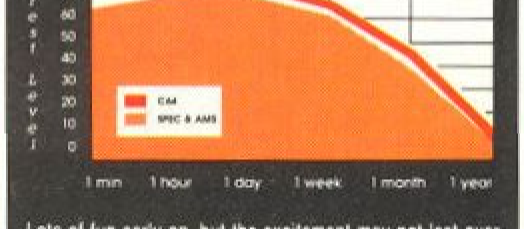
POOR Matt Tracker; it seems like only yesterday that he had to rescue the President from the clutches of VENOM, then the vicious, evil, nasty etc. bunch snatch his very own son. So off he goes, giving Gremlin the plot for this third part in their *Mask* series.

Alex (that's Tracker Jr.) is being kept on a Venom base on the dark side of the moon. New weapons have been employed by the baddies, and this time Matt is on his own. He sets off along a sideways scrolling landscape (which differs slightly from version to version – see boxes) avoiding Venom's weapons and trying to get through the various levels until he can find and rescue his nipper.

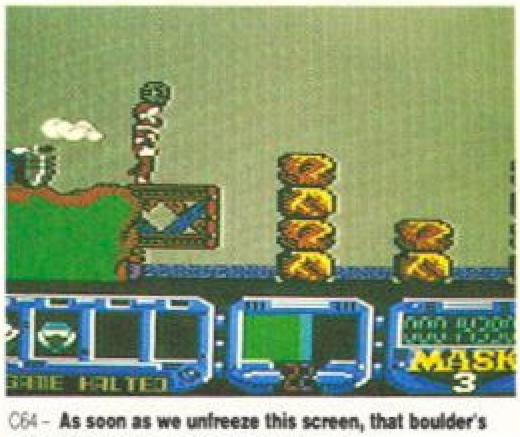
While the game isn't terribly original, it's very well constructed; there's plenty to shoot, the difficulty level is about right and the sound effects add to the overall effect. Newcomers to the series will find it pleasant enough, while fans of *Mask* (the games) will definitely want to investigate. It may not be a long-term challenge, but the short-term fun will be considerable.

● Pete Connor

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Lots of fun early on, but the excitement may not last over longer periods.



C64 – **As soon as we unfreeze this screen, that boulder's going to do some real damage to our Matt.**

C64 VERSION

Bright, colourful graphics and bouncy sound are added to instant playability. You get the option of using weapons and jump jet masks, but not the Penetrator for invisibility. The overall impression is of a smooth and very playable game.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 713

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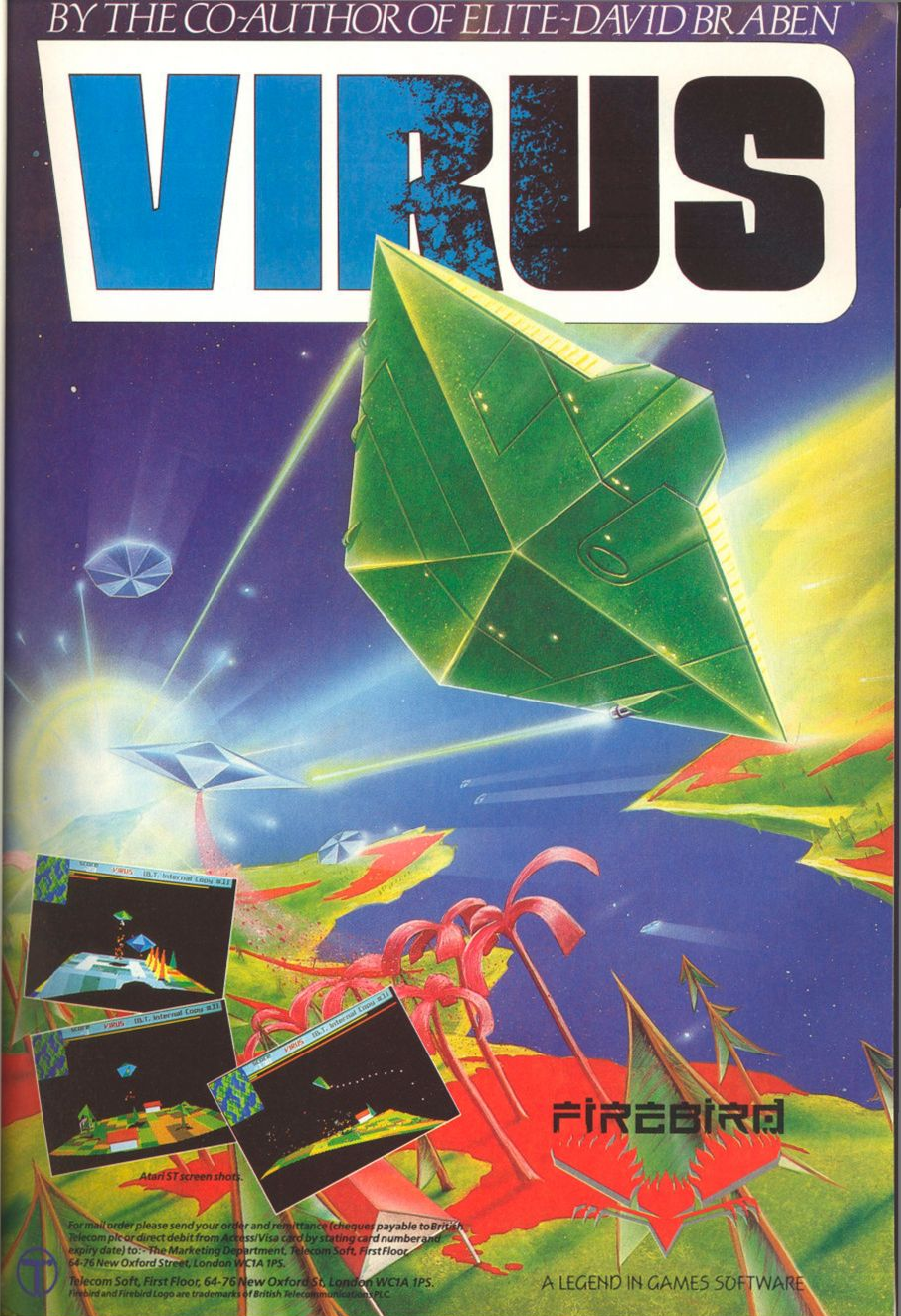
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SPIDERTRONIC

ERE get arachnoid

903
ACE RATED

WHAT is it about this game that makes it so madly addictive? The great animation on your little spider perhaps, or the terrific sound effects? The clean colours and Escher-style perspectives of the game landscapes even? No, what really does the trick is the game's *Pac Man* simplicity.

Take the game task for example: all you have to do on each of the game's ten levels is get your spider to the exit teleport. The only problem facing you is the series of holes in your way. To reach the teleport you'll need to fill the holes with coloured squares, collecting them one at a time in a set order. On-screen indicators tell you what colour you're carrying or will need to look for next so brain-work here isn't a problem, but because you can only carry one square at a time you'll clearly need to do a lot of running around.

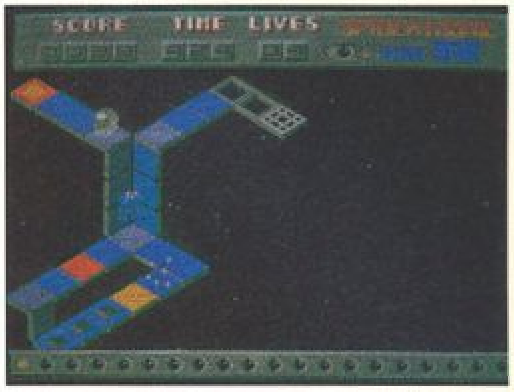
At this point you come up against the game's two big problems: time and bubbles. As you scuttle around the game layout the clock is running, and it'll cost you one of your five lives if you let it run down to zero. Time bonuses are scattered around game levels to help you keep up and losing a life resets the clock so this won't be too much of a problem early on, but as the levels grow larger and the number of holes rises you may find things getting a bit tougher.

A far more immediate threat to your spider's wellbeing comes from the dreaded bubbles, wandering nasties that kill on contact. You can lay lethal webs in their path to turn the tables on these bouncing bad-guys – you are a spider after all! – but this is only a partial solution. For one thing, you can only lay webs on plain blue tiles: on lift pads, coloured squares and other surfaces you're left defenceless. When you succeed in laying a web it may do you more harm than good, restricting your movement dangerously – you can't walk over your own web – and in any case its effect is only temporary. Webs evaporate after a little while, and new bubbles reappear to replace any you manage to destroy.

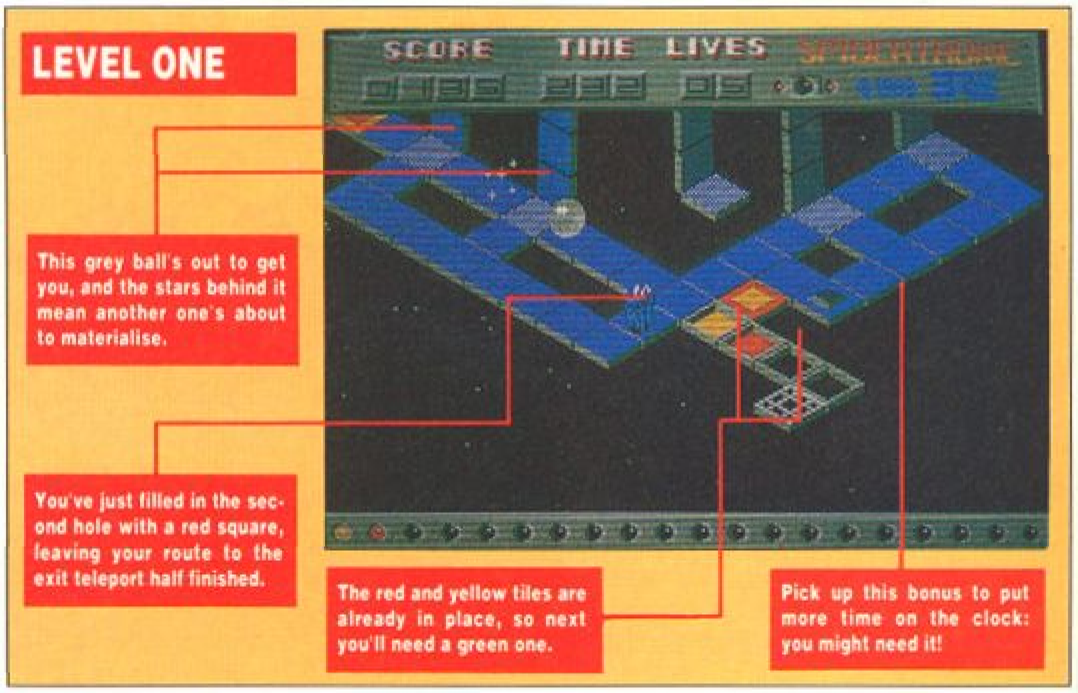
No, the best general technique for dealing with bubbles is to avoid them. At first this is a question of reflexes and keeping cool under pressure – things can get very hairy at times! – but gradually you'll find things getting tactical. Different colour bubbles behave in slightly different ways and new bubbles appear in fixed (though unmarked) positions, so there's plenty of scope for learning and planning. There's all the flexibility of classic arcade adventures in devising your own route for speed or safety: it's your choice!

That's all very well, you might say, but isn't ten screens rather few? Murderously tough though the later ones are, the average player will eventually manage to get through them all – sooner rather than later indeed, thanks to the small-hours-of-the-morning obsession the game creates. Once you've managed this stupendous feat the game's by no means finished with, thanks to a rather nice built-in construction set. Sadly this is keyboard-only, but even without the use of mouse or joystick you'll find yourself knocking out your own levels till the cows come home.

● Andy Wilton



CUSTOM LEVEL
Construction sets – don't you just love'em? Here's a little something we made earlier. It's a good deal easier than any of the built-in screens!



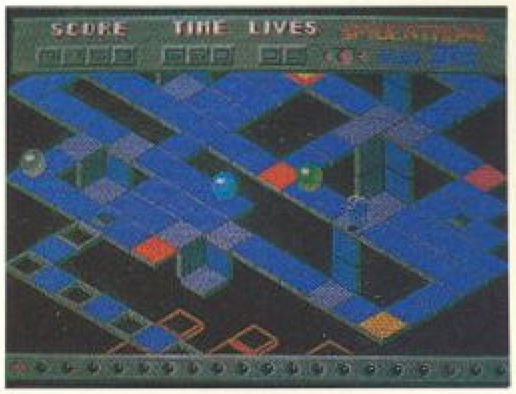
LEVEL ONE

This grey ball's out to get you, and the stars behind it mean another one's about to materialise.

You've just filled in the second hole with a red square, leaving your route to the exit teleport half finished.

The red and yellow tiles are already in place, so next you'll need a green one.

Pick up this bonus to put more time on the clock: you might need it!



LEVEL THREE
There's just no time to admire that perspective illusion behind you!

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		

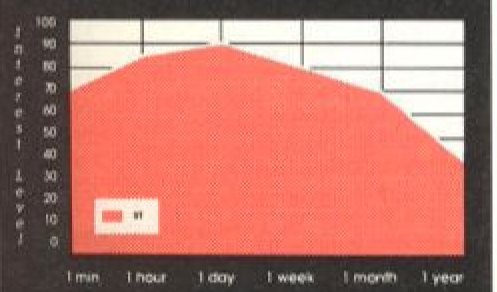
ATARI ST VERSION

Graphics and sound are both top-notch – no surprise this, given the game's Gallic origins – adding real charm to the manically addictive underlying gameplay. If only all French software could be this playable!

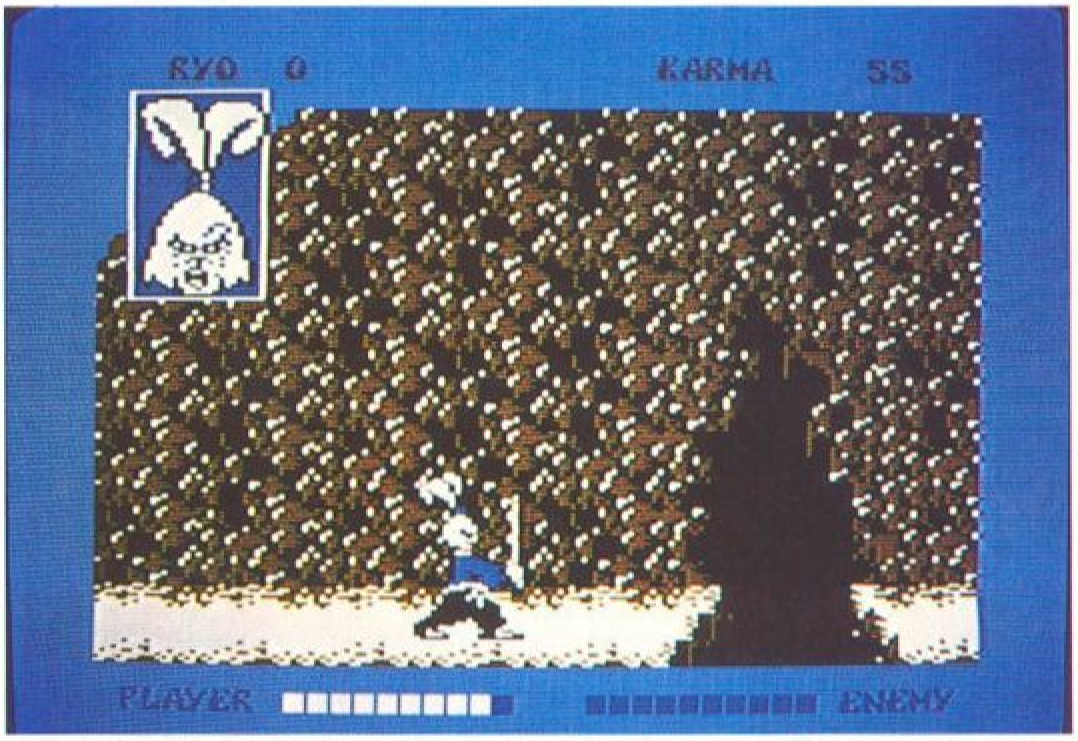
GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	5
AUDIO	9	**FUN FACTOR**	9

ACE RATING 903

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



That construction set provides the lasting interest.



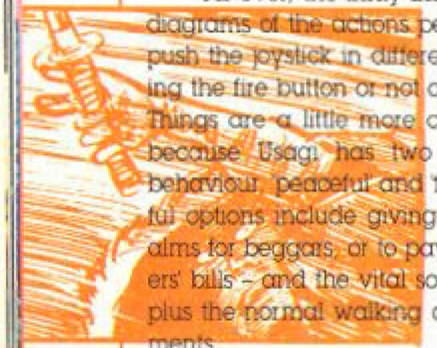
Usagi's got his sword out so that he can get across that chasm with a fighting-mode leap. He'd better sheath it once he's on the other side, so as not to antagonise other game characters.

SAMURAI WARRIOR

FIREBIRD's bushido bunny

RONIN - the jobless samurai of the Edo period - are common enough heroic figures in Japanese comic strips, but ronin rabbits? We could only be talking about *Usagi Yojimbo*, one of the new breed of comic strips marrying funny animals to serious violence, as programmed by Beam Software and licensed by Firebird.

As the fearless and honourable Usagi you must fight your scrolling, sideways-on way across Japan, paying your bills and observing proper rules of etiquette. You're going to the aid of your old friend Lord Noriyuki, but the villainous Lord Hijiki has put a price on your head. You won't get far before ninjas and ronin bounty hunters attack, so your swordsmanship had better be up to the mark.



As ever, the inlay instructions carry little diagrams of the actions performed when you push the joystick in different directions, pressing the fire button or not as the case may be. Things are a little more complex than usual because Usagi has two distinct modes of behaviour, 'peaceful' and 'fighting'. The peaceful options include giving money - either as alms for beggars, or to pay tolls and innkeepers' bills - and the vital social skill of bowing, plus the normal walking and jumping movements.

The last peaceful option, drawing your sword, switches you into fighting mode. Here you have running and leaping options, the latter being essential for getting across chasms, plus three different kinds of sword blow. The blows are all triggered by different lengths of fire button press, a method that works surprisingly well in the heat of action.

For the most part your interaction with other creatures is a matter of being polite, but ninjas leaping from trees or springing from the undergrowth need tackling fast. Peasants may in fact be ninjas in disguise and enormous monsters may also attack you, so you'll need to be on your guard. Being polite to your betters, kind to peasants and merciless to attackers will add to your 'karma' total: this not only acts as a score, but can also gain you 'reincarnation' - a chance to skip the easier levels next game - which can be vital to progress given that you only have one life.

The gameplay's rather dated in a lot of ways, with its linear playing area - the 'route choices' offered usually turn out to be between a useful path and a death-trap - and sudden-death situations. This ought to ruin the game, but curiously it doesn't. In fact Usagi's quest is remarkably compulsive stuff that'll have you hacking and bowing almost indefinitely if there's an ounce of samurai in you.

● Andy Wilton

C64 VERSION

Terrific animation, great backdrops and two goodish tunes - one for peaceful mode and one for fighting - make this very presentable stuff indeed.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	2
AUDIO	6	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 737

MANGA!

Comics are all the rage these days, samurai comics doubly so. 'Manga' - Japanese comics like *Usagi Yojimbo* - are produced in vast numbers for home consumption, but now some of the best are reaching the USA and Britain in translated form.

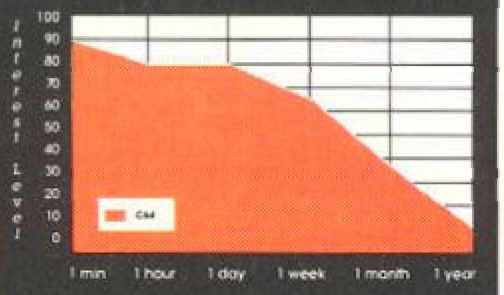
The beauty, brutality and philosophical depth of traditional strips like *Lone Wolf and Cub* and *The Legend of Kamui* may have taken the comics world by storm, but they've not managed to overshadow the funny-animals-with-weapons trend started by the American *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

The numerous animal-based comics that followed - *Pre-teen Dirty-gene Kung Fu Kangaroos*, would you believe? - were the inspiration for CRL's *Ninja Hamster* and may yet spawn other similar beat-em-ups; but as *Samurai Warrior* shows, you can get a bit closer to the spirit of a comic strip than that.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£8.95cs, £14.95dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Great fun in the short-term, but lack of depth means it won't last too long.

STRIP POKER 2 +

ANCO get 'em off

TACKY, tacky, tacky! That's your first reaction to *Strip Poker 2 +*. OK, so it's all meant as a bit of fun, but considered purely as a game the graphics are naff, it plays a weak game of poker and you only get two 'opponents' - Donna and Sam - to play against. Some will find it repulsive, some will find it tedious - and yes, some will find it titillating (nearly fifteen quid for a couple of pictures of naked women!). Let's put it this way - if we showed you screen shots of your two playmates finally stripped of all their assets, would there still be any point playing the game?

● Rod Lawton

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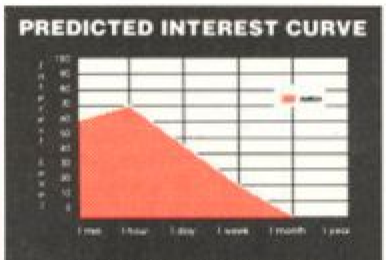
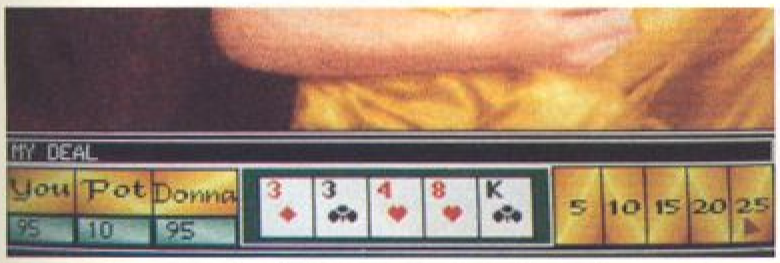
ATARI ST	£14.95dk	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



ACE RATING 392



RIM RUNNER

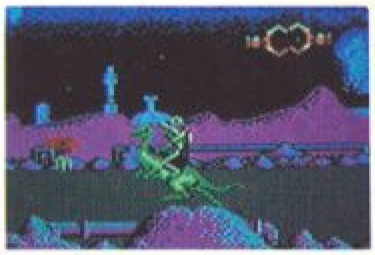
PALACE saddle up a lizard

RUNNING round the place repairing power satellites is tough work if you're only a small green maintenance being, so it's just as well your bosses have given you a large lizard to ride on in this sideways scrolling fix-em-up.

As you trot around the place blasting airborne nasties, killer satellites and incoming meteors your main enemy is time. Fix all the power satellites by the time the clock runs out and there's another screen of the same, fail - or run out of life force, or of lizards to ride - and it's game over.

The wrap-round playing area and scanner are very reminiscent of *Defender*, but the gameplay isn't quite in that league. Bags of nice touches, but the action's so monotonous you probably won't stay the course.

● Andy Wilton



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C64/128	£8.99cs, £12.99dk	OUT NOW
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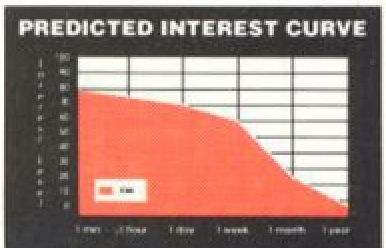
AMS	£8.99cs, £14.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



ACE RATING 648

WARLOCK'S QUEST

ERE we go again

HEAVENS above! The head nasty in this arcade adventure cum shoot-em-up is so mean, so nasty, he can only be referred to as HE or HIM!

Now, HE has only gone and pinched mankind's most precious jewel, the Karna, and is now skulking in his hideaway in the bowels of the earth, where HE thinks HE's safe. But HE didn't figure on you trying to recover the jewel, did HE? No siree, HE didn't. HE also didn't realise you were one mean warlock with a fireball-firing staff.

Before you come face to face with HIM, however, you have to collect eight items which can be found lying around the game area. Getting to one of these items is often tricky as they are usually in hard to get at places and are often guarded by some particularly vicious meanie. These toughies can usually be despatched by a few well-aimed shots from your trusty staff, whereas the majority of the meanies - all shapes and sizes from bouncing tree-like krakens to floating ghosts - can be despatched with a single shot. Obviously you can't just run around blasting away at all and sundry without having to pay in some way. Shots cost power points, and you only start with 3000 points, so choose your shots carefully. Also steadily decreasing is your vitality, and contact with meanies results in it plummeting - but fast! Fortunately, some of the nasties carry various trinkets around with them, including vitality potions and protection orbs.

Warlock's quest is frustrating enough to make you have 'just one more go' and if you're a keen arcade adventurer you'll probably grit your teeth and keep going until you've completed it - which actually won't take you all that long.

● Andy Smith

ATARI ST VERSION

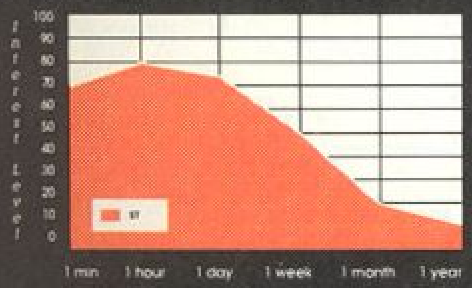
Great (if small) graphics, and some atmospheric sound effects make this an enjoyable game. But it really doesn't do anything better, or radically different, than *Cauldron* did on the 8-bit machines a couple of years ago.

GRAPHICS	7	**IQ FACTOR**	5
AUDIO	6	**FUN FACTOR**	6

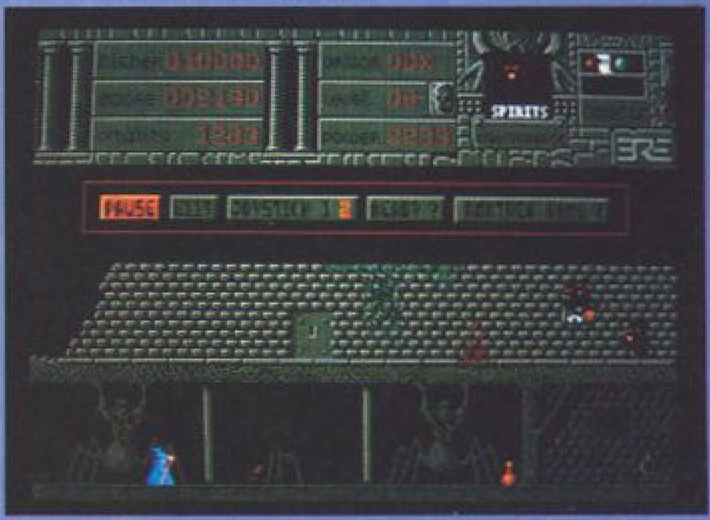
ACE RATING 630

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

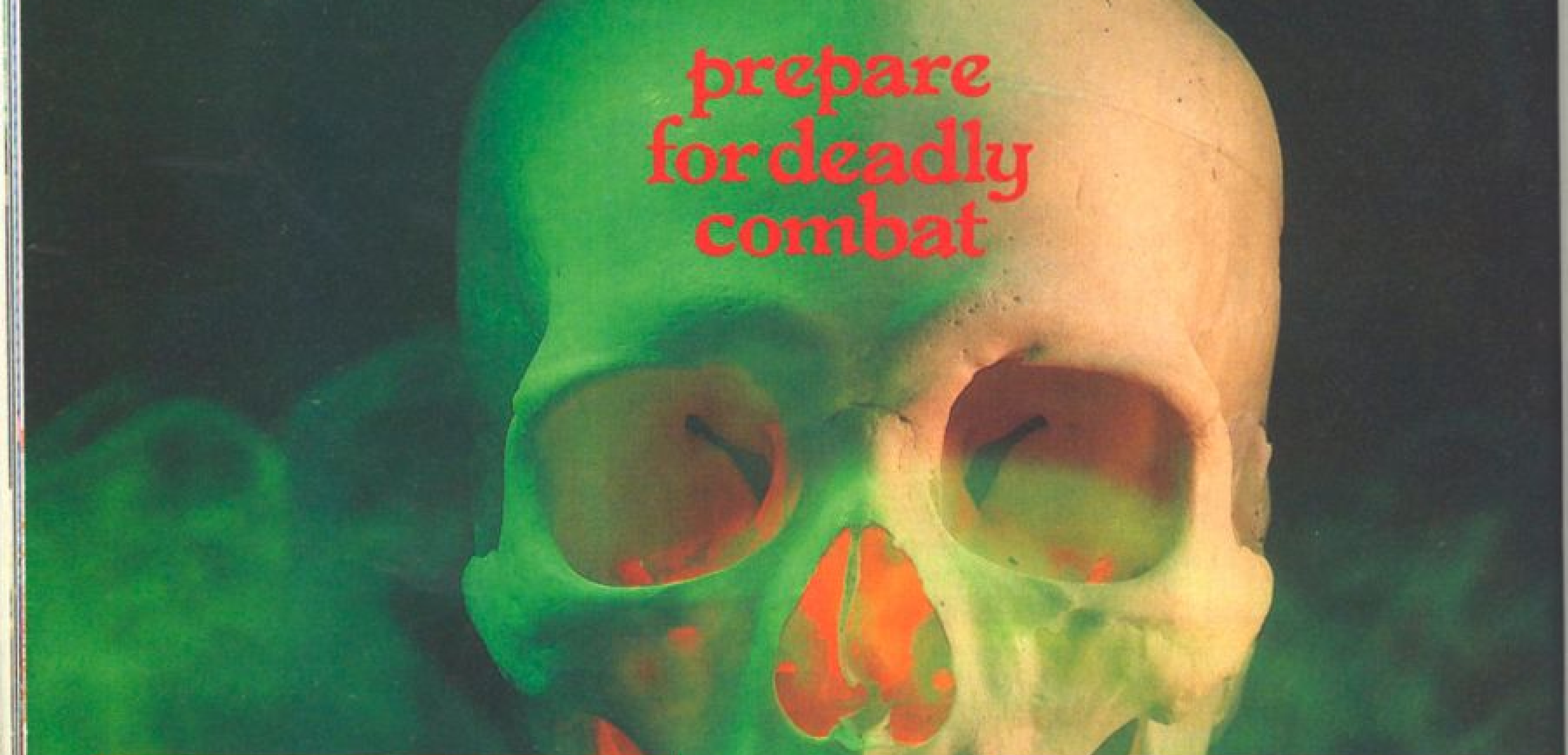


An arcade adventure that's nothing very special.



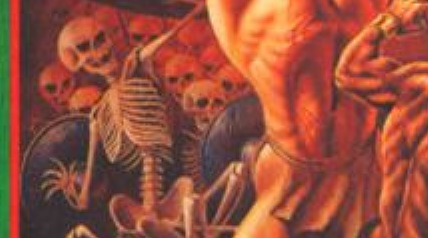
Atari ST - Warlock ain't 'fraid o' no spider.

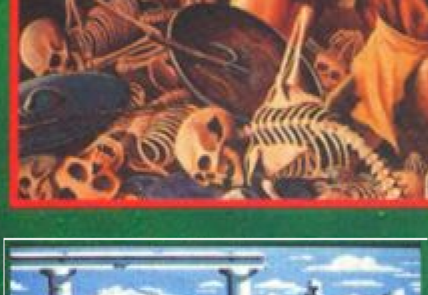
Warriors of the Past...
Warriors of the Future...



HERCULES
SLAYER OF THE DAMNED
ATARI ST £19.99 Disk
SPECTRUM 48/128K
£7.99 Cassette
SPECTRUM +3 £12.99 Disk
CBM 64/128
£9.99 Cassette – £14.99 Disk
AMSTRAD CPC
£9.99 Cassette – £14.99 Disk
MSX £7.99 Cassette

BLOOD BROTHERS
CBM 64/128
£9.99 Cassette – £14.99 Disk
AMSTRAD CPC
£9.99 Cassette – £14.99 Disk
SPECTRUM 48/128K
£7.99 Cassette
SPECTRUM +3 £12.99 Disk



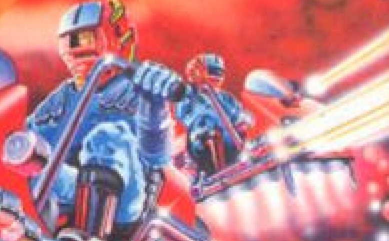


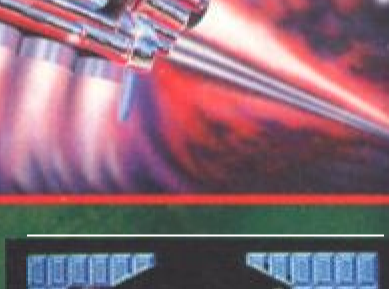
HERCULES –
SLAYER OF THE DAMNED

Son of the Gods, curse of his fellow men, Hercules is set 12 awesome tasks to exonerate the sin of murdering his children. Armed by his divine fathers he sets forth to face the hideous skeleton hordes and ultimately overcome the evil minotaur. To slay the damned is his only saviour in repenting his sins.

BLOOD BROTHERS

"Our blood is mixed,
We are as one,
Let no man or beast come between us,
And let nothing deter us from our aim,
To avenge the deaths of our parents,
And destroy the Scorpians,
DEATH TO THE SCORPIANS"





GREMLIN

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

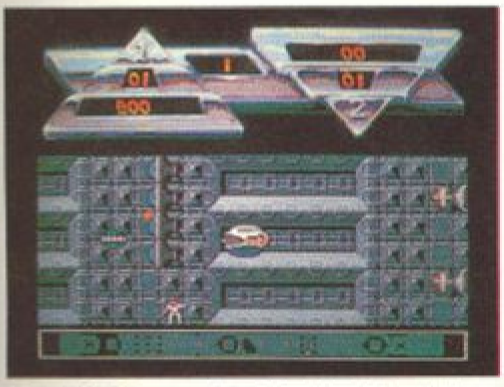
RETURN TO GENESIS

FIREBIRD shoot-em-up by *Goldrunner* out of *Uridium*

SUPER smooth sideways scrolling graphics, as the inlay has it, are no longer something which amaze us as we play games on our STs or Amigas; we expect the graphics to be that good as a matter of course. So a game has to have a little more than those super smoooth etc. etc. to lift it anywhere near the Hall of Fame.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.95dk	IMMINENT



That ovoid thing's your rebounding ship. And aren't those metallic backgrounds reminiscent of rather too many scrolling shoot-em-ups?

Return to Genesis, unfortunately, doesn't quite do the business. It is super... and it's fast, and it will give your reflexes a good old working out. But it isn't original, it won't make you think (much) and it isn't likely to be one of those games you carry on playing for months on end.

It's essentially a sideaways scrolling shoot-em-up, in which the scientists you pick up along the way act like the extra weapons features in many another scrolling shooter. At first glance it will remind you very much of *Uridium*, with its metallic backgrounds, inertia, and rebounding spaceship. A little more play and you could be put in mind of *Goldrunner* – and that won't be very surprising, since one of the authors is none other than Steve Baks, and guess what he wrote? Yes, *Goldrunner*.

The game does have some very nice features; the digitised speech is neat and there's some spacey music when you select which rescued scientist's powers you'll use. *Return to Genesis* is very smoothly programmed, but it's a derivative of a derivative, and not as much thought has gone into the design as into the coding.

● Pete Connor

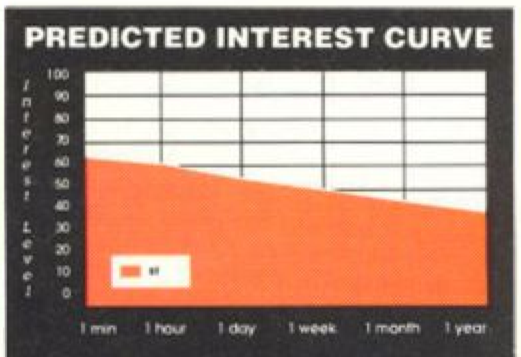
ATARI ST VERSION

Smooth, fast (too fast, perhaps?) and with some nice sound effects and music, It's a very professional piece of programming. Niggle points – apart from the utter unoriginality – are the relatively small area of screen available for the action itself, and the rather overdone rebound when your ship hits an obstacle.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	2
AUDIO	8	**FUN FACTOR**	4

ACE RATING 624

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Classy – but this kind of thing is getting pretty boring.

KARNOV

Koin-op kapers from ELECTRIC DREAMS

WHEN you can literally breathe fire, you don't have an awful lot to fear. You can go off on and have fun safe in the knowledge that you're a match for anything that may come your way. Karnov's modest aim in life – or at least in this coin-op conversion – is to save the world, to do which he must defeat the evil wizard Ryu and regain the stolen treasure of Babylon.

To achieve this, Karnov must take part in what is basically a platform game with knobs on; rather than simply progressing sideways you can use objects to move in other directions. So, if you have the ladder, you can go up, and so on. This added dimension makes the game more interesting than it might otherwise have been.

Naturally, you are under constant assault from the hordes of baddies the wiz Ryu has left behind. These take some pretty wacky shapes; ostriches, goblins, statues. Breathing fire (diamond shaped bullets) at them will finish them off, but not always as easily as you might like.

RELEASE BOX

SPEC	£9.99cs	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	SEPT

While *Karnov* is graphically accomplished, and has a few new twists on the platform theme, it's pretty old hat stuff. Also, after the first level, gameplay can become very frustrating; some might say unplayably so.

● Pete Connor

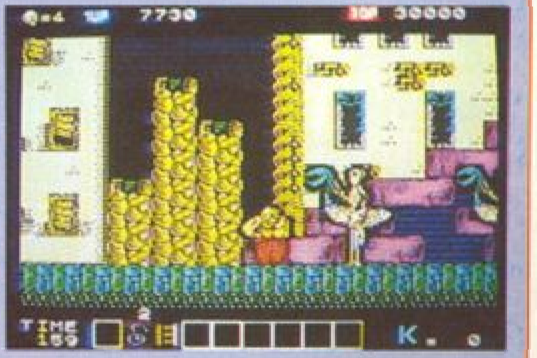
SPECTRUM VERSION

Graphics really are very impressive indeed; large characters, smooth animation, no colour clash. The sound isn't quite as striking, but what do you expect from the Spectrum? Although it's based on a coin-op, nobody here has ever seen the original machine, so it's hard to comment on the faithfulness of the conversion – but as you'd expect with an arcade game, the Spectrum isn't the best of machines to see it on.

A major drawback for many players will be the multi-load cassette; even after reaching level 2 you have to rewind and start back at the beginning. The tedium rapidly turns to raging frustration.

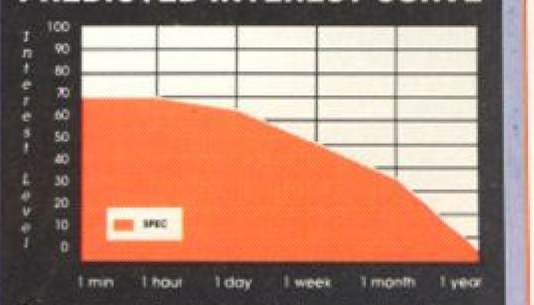
GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	6

ACE RATING 612

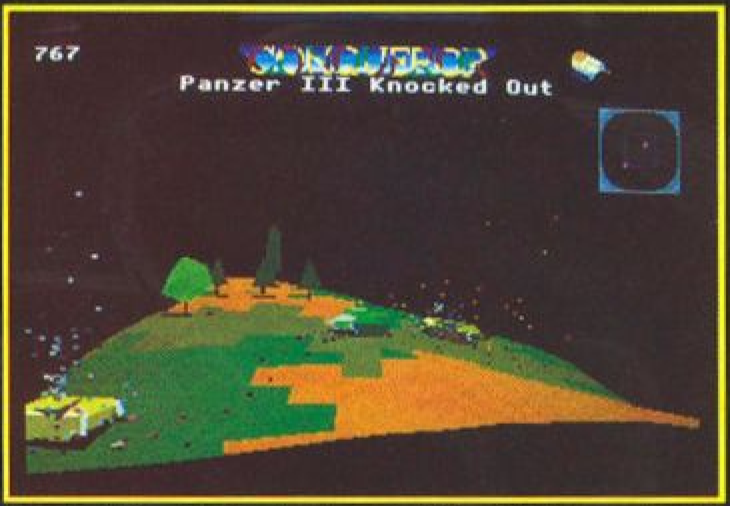


Our hairless hero breathing his fire at assorted goblins.

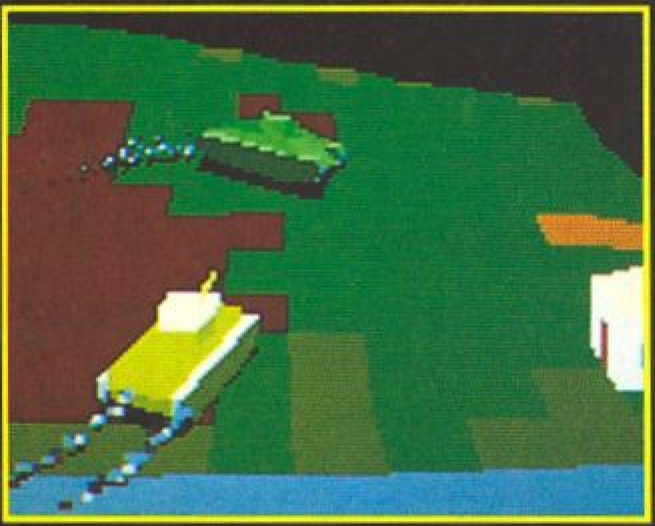
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Fun gives way to frustration, which turns into boredom.



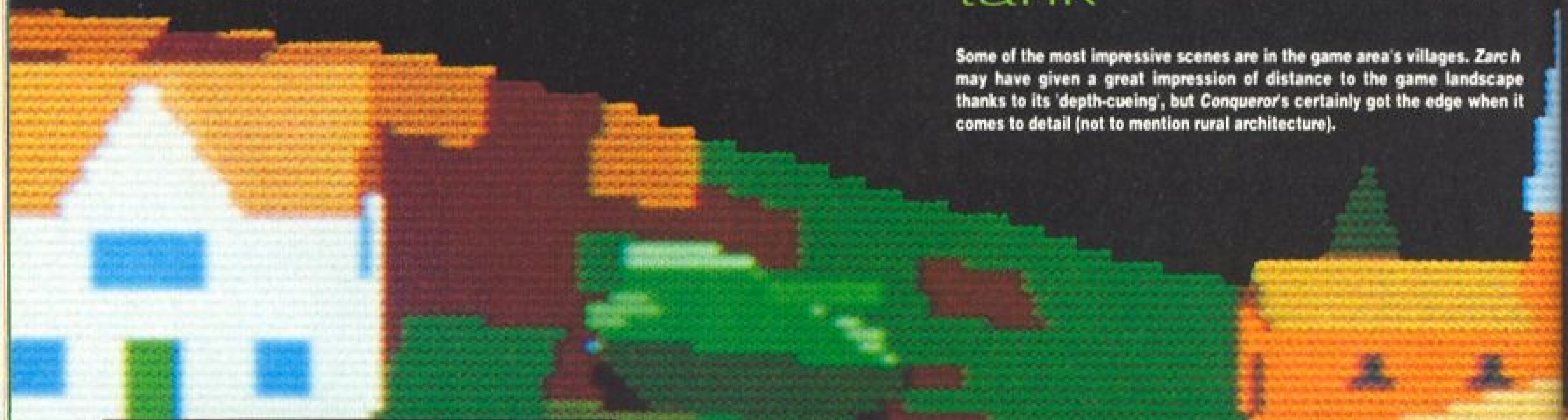
The poor old Panzer III really does have a rough time of it in this game. Here it's taken on the tiny M24 Chaffee, but despite its armour advantage the Panzer's still bitten the dust. It all comes down to firepower and speed, two things the Chaffee's got bags of. It looks like the Yanks are having a field day – that smouldering heap in the foreground was also German.



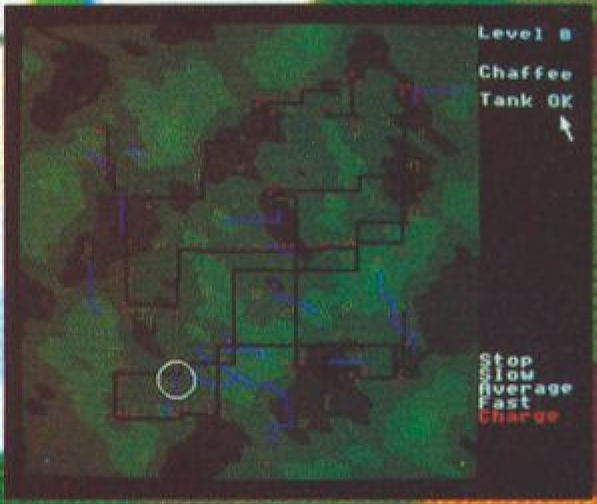
The lightest Russian tank in the game meets the lightest German tank, but don't expect it to be an even-handed business. The T34 can outgun and outmanoeuvre the Panzer III, it's got much heavier armour plus it's got a side-on shot to the Panzer's frontal: what follows will be short and to the point.

CONQUEROR

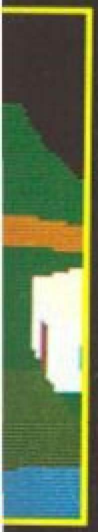
SUPERIOR put a Tiger in your tank



Some of the most impressive scenes are in the game area's villages. *Zarch* may have given a great impression of distance to the game landscape thanks to its 'depth-cueing', but *Conqueror*'s certainly got the edge when it comes to detail (not to mention rural architecture).



Here's the *Conqueror* playing area, the contours of the landscape showing up as different shades of green. The black lines are roads (which will help your mobility considerably), while the blue lines are rivers (which won't). At the moment you're giving orders to your Chaffee: the larger cyan dot is its current position, while the smaller is its current destination.



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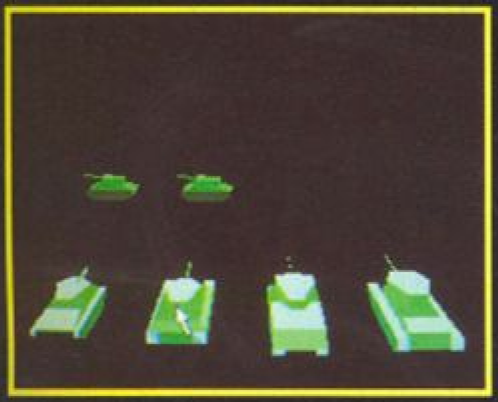
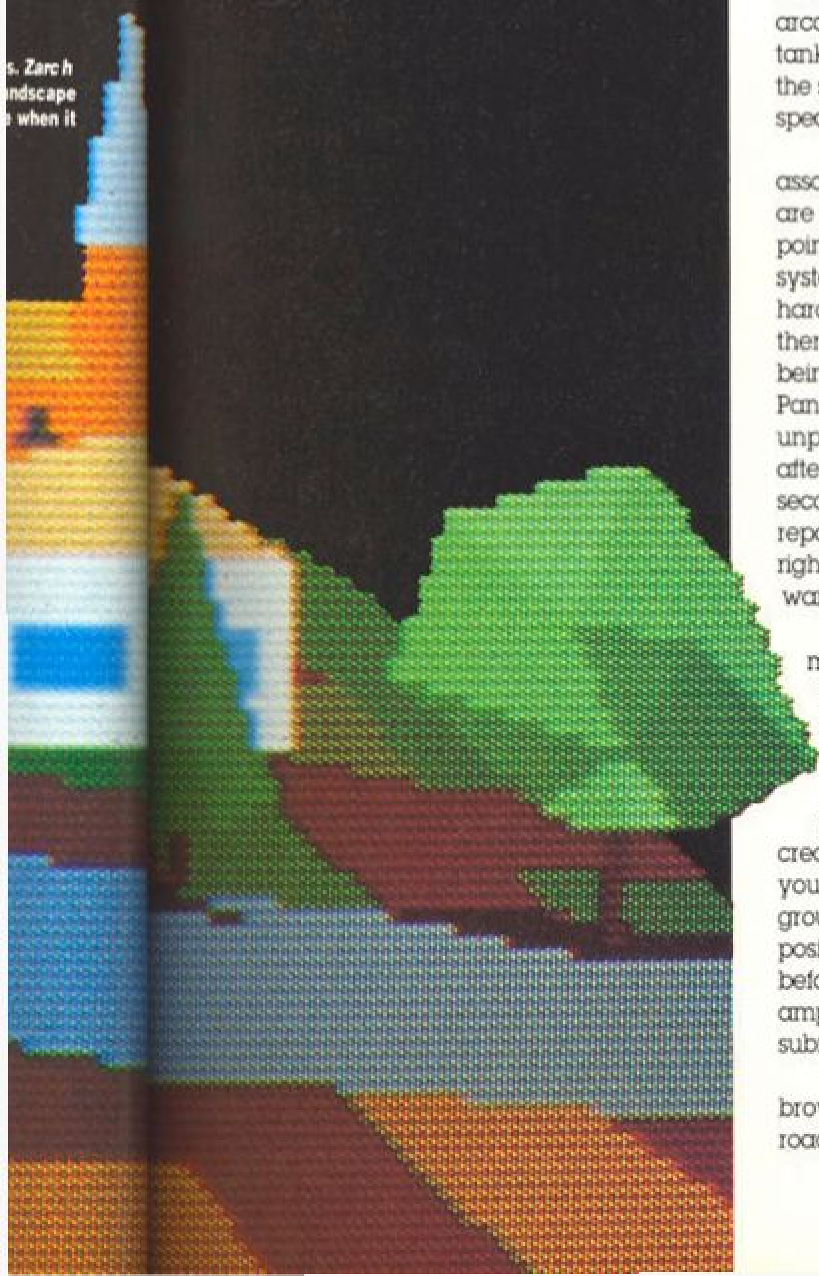


You've chosen to play the American commander this game, so now you've got to put your battle group together. You're on a limited budget and the two tanks you've already chosen (in the background, facing left) have taken most of your credit. There's not enough left in the kitty for the M36 Jackson tank destroyer under the pointer, the Sherman Firefly to its right is far too expensive and the M26 Pershing beyond that is right out. Looks like it'll have to be the Chaffee at far left, folks.

s. Zarch
ndscape
when it



INCREDIBLY *Conqueror* is only the third commercial game offering for Acorn's Archimedes after nine months of the machine's existence.

Conqueror has the look of the Archie's first game *Zarch* and author Jonathan Griffiths has borrowed much of the code masterfully created by Dave Braben. The familiar solid 3D patchwork quilt undulating, flowing landscape now sets the scene for a pseudo-World War II battle ground infested with tanks. All twelve US, German, and Soviet tanks selectable are WWII era, but the game adds such modern niceties as radar and an electronic mapping system to aid the strategy side of things.

Despite such obvious enhancements to WWII reality, the tanks' individual characteristics are meticulously reproduced down to such details as speed, firepower, and armour strength. Visually, it's sometimes not easy to distinguish different tank models, as Griffiths has chosen fairly minute on-screen representations. The small 30-page manual supplied gives the lowdown on all the tanks featured, along with their war history. Battle-scene views have a deep perspective with your own tank central to the screen at all times, so it's easier (and much more interesting) to watch another tank close up in the foreground compared to one in the distance.

931
ACE RATED

Superior claim that *Conqueror* is really three games rolled into one, and certainly there is a lot to tax the ol' grey cells. Level One is a straight 'shoot everything in sight' arcade mode, and you only control one tank. The more of the enemy you notch up, the stronger your tank gets, though generally speaking the enemy gets stronger faster.

Attrition mode gives you access to an assortment of five different tanks, and you are given the tast of finding destination points for each via the electronic mapping system. Early levels are quite easy, with hardly any of the enemy to negotiate. Further on, the action can get quite hectic – being surrounded by five hostile King Tigers, Panzers or Russian T34s is a short-lived and unpleasant experience! If you can survive after being damaged for more than twenty seconds your tank will be automatically repaired. A small radar display at the top-right of the screen gives you a short-range warning of approaching friends or foe.

For strategy fans there's a Strategy mode. This is similar to Attrition mode, but you have the added luxuries of spotter planes and the ability to call up artillery fire by using the map display. At the beginning of a Strategy game you must buy your complement of tanks with credits. The higher you get the more credits you can earn to strengthen your battle group. To vary the game you are able to reposition selected tanks around the field before the game is started proper. There is ample strategic and tactical complication to submerge yourself in if that's what you want.

The landscape is a combination of browns and greens, interrupted by grey roadways and bright blue rivers. Entering a town reveals a bit more screen interest, with houses and even the odd church or two to hide behind or obliterate.

Tank control is a rather tricky combined mouse and keyboard effort. Steering, and thus forward or backward movement control, is via operation of the left and right tank caterpillar tracks from the keyboard. Proceeding backwards is much slower than forwards, and it's not wise to go amphibian in a river, but you won't sink, you'll be slowed down considerably. However, it is possible to delay a pursuer by drawing it into the river while you make a hasty escape.

Using roads speeds up progress usefully. The mouse is dedicated to gun and turret control. Dragging the mouse forward and back will raise and elevate the gun, and the left/right buttons swivel the turret accordingly. Gun firing is operated by the centre mouse button, and all the turret operations can be operated from the keyboard alone if you wish. Swivelling the turret while turning the tank and raising or lowering the gun and firing all at once requires several pairs of hands.

Conqueror is going to mesmerise some and bore the pants off others. If you don't like complex gameplay, are scared off by tricky controls and (most important of all) don't have a 1Mb Archimedes – forget it.

● Arthur King

RELEASE BOX

ARCHIM	£24.95dk	OUT NOW

ST and Amiga versions under development

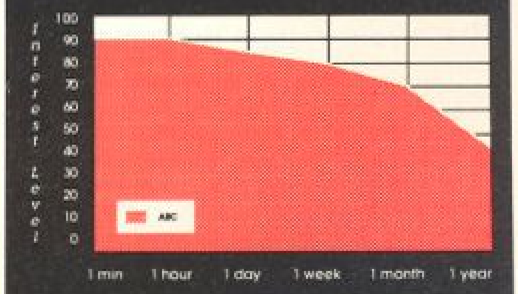
ARCHIMEDES VERSION

For a computer with such powerful audio capabilities, the Archimedes has so far disappointed with its games sonics, and unfortunately *Conqueror* continues the tradition. A quite realistic sound of squeaking and rattling caterpillar tracks signifies when you're on the move, and the cannon-fire effect is characteristic of the genuine thing. But that's all there is besides the ubiquitous explosions.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 931

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Very compelling stuff – if you like tanks, that is!

CYBERNOID

HEWSON fight piracy

CARGO collecting, alien shooting, obstacle avoiding – it's all in this latest offering from Raffaele Cecco (he of *Exolon* and *Equinox* fame). The plot's simple enough: it would appear that pirates have raided a number of Federation storage depots and plan to make off with the precious cargo.

RELEASE BOX

SPEC	£7.99cs, £14.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	OUT NOW
AMS	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	IMMINENT

C64 VERSION

Arguably the best of the bunch. The graphics are very smooth and colourful and the music's very listenable. Gameplay is terrific and if you enjoy games that have you tearing out your hair in a short space of time, you won't be disappointed with *Cybernoid*.

GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 2
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 8

ACE RATING 772

SPECTRUM VERSION

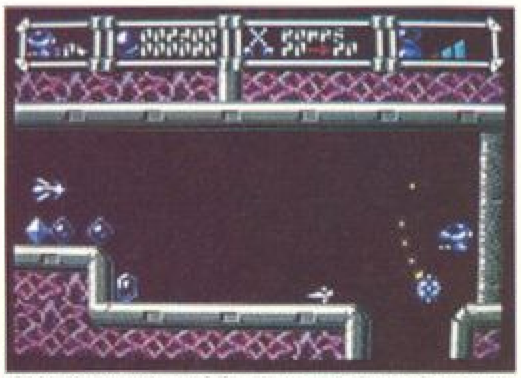
The graphics are good and the music is jaunty. Gameplay is fine and generally the game lives up to all expectations. Highly playable and very frustrating.

GRAPHICS 7 **IQ FACTOR** 2
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 8

ACE RATING 766

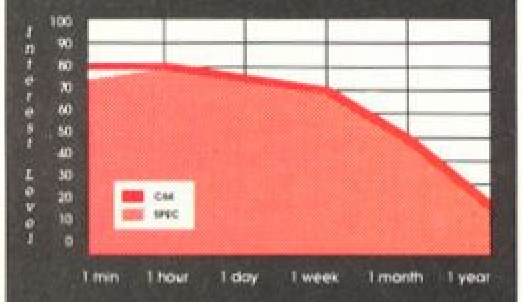
You're given a Cybernoid ship in which to retrieve and return the cargo to a depot within the specified time, and just to make life difficult the pirates have also activated all the planetary defence systems, and there are still loads of pirates in the vicinity. The pirates are not so tough to deal with as you're armed with a front-firing gun and a small supply of bombs to start with, and you can find extra weapons scattered around the planet, making the task of destroying aliens a mite easier. The planetary defences are another matter though. Timing is the key to getting past most of the obstacles (if you can't destroy them with a well-aimed bomb) and some very careful positioning.

All this makes for a very good-looking, very playable and very frustrating game that is also very unoriginal. *Cybernoid* adds a new twist to the *Exolon* genre of games but it doesn't add anything that hasn't been seen and done a hundred times before. If you're a fan of this type of game then you'll probably love it to bits, but if you're looking for something new and innovative, then perhaps you should look elsewhere.


C64 – You've got a swirling drone and plenty of cargo to pick up.

● Andy Smith

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Very addictive, very frustrating, but also very unoriginal.

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

MICRODEAL's two left feet

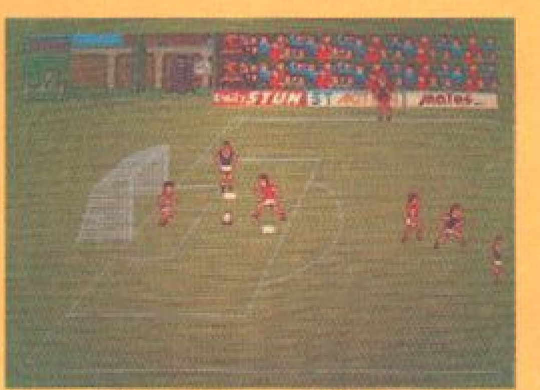
CAN Microdeal's *International Soccer* do for 16-bit machine owning football fanatics what Ocean's *Matchday* and *Matchday II* did for their 8-bit counterparts?

Probably not. Sadly, *International Soccer* just doesn't cut the mustard. The game initially looks promising, with a one or two-player option, 11 players per team, options for pitch conditions (wet or dry), the team's formation on the pitch (number of forwards, defenders etc), whether to play under floodlights, whether to play for 5, 10, 30 or 45 minutes per half etc. etc. The player even gets to choose which way the wind should blow during the match. All these options, however, can't hide *International Soccer's* poor gameplay. Having 11 players per team is not in itself a problem, identifying which of the many on-screen players you're actually controlling *is*. This and the fact that the game has some dodgy collision detection can have the player crying 'foul' every other minute. The game does have a good tackle facility and nine skill levels, but even this can't lift it out of the second division.

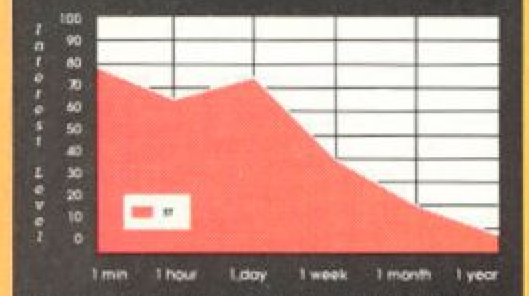
● Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.95dk	IMMINENT


Oops! A sliding tackle in the box gives the computer a penalty shot (it scored).

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Gets a little better once you get to grips with it, but even then the game doesn't last.

ATARI ST VERSION

Though you've got four tunes to change between, they're all liable to get on your nerves after about five minutes. It would have been nice to be able to turn the music off during the game but unfortunately you can't. The graphics are fine but nothing special. There's nothing in here to stretch your mind, and not much to get you excited either.

GRAPHICS 5 **IQ FACTOR** 1
AUDIO 2 **FUN FACTOR** 5

ACE RATING 576

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BERMUDA PROJECT

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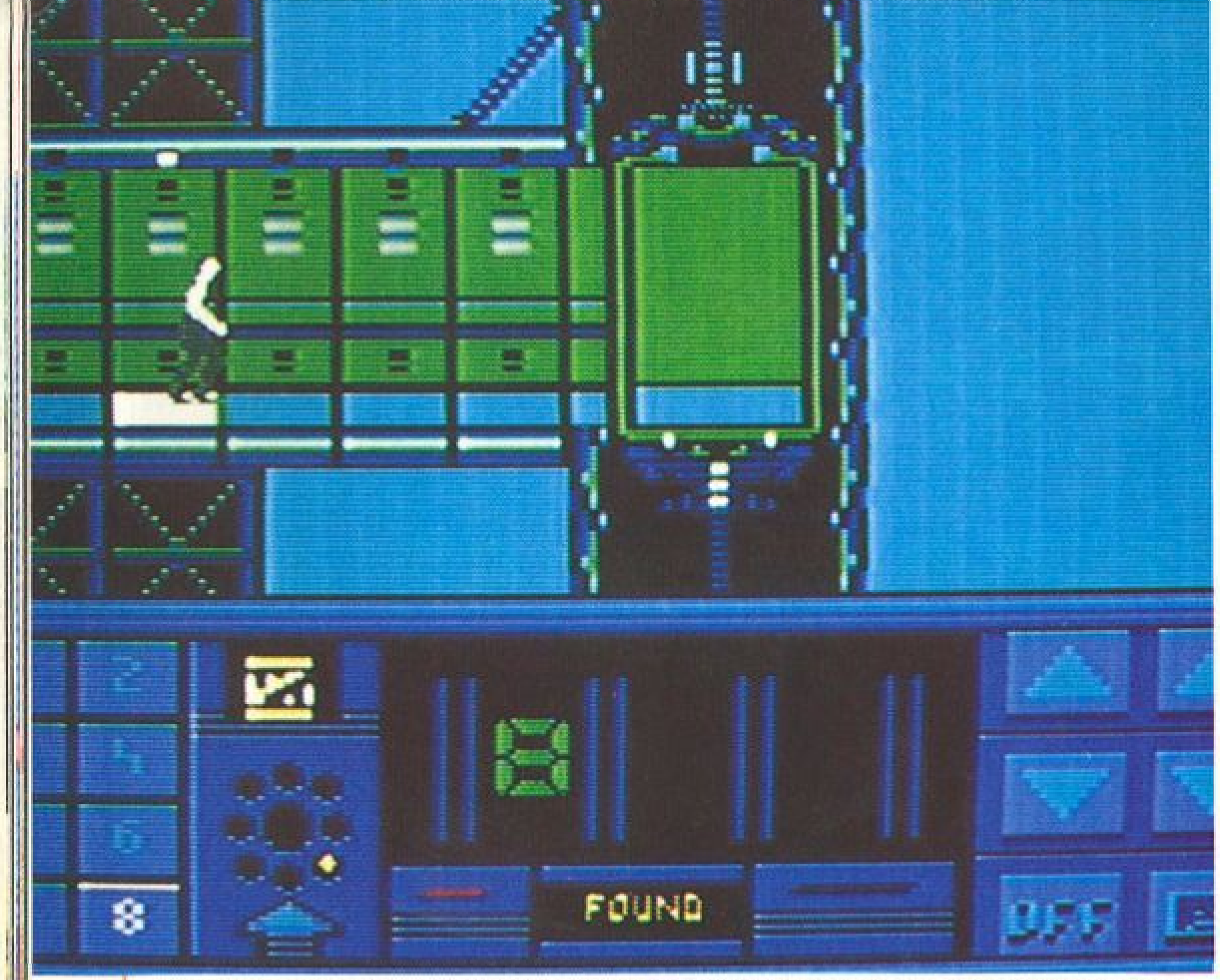
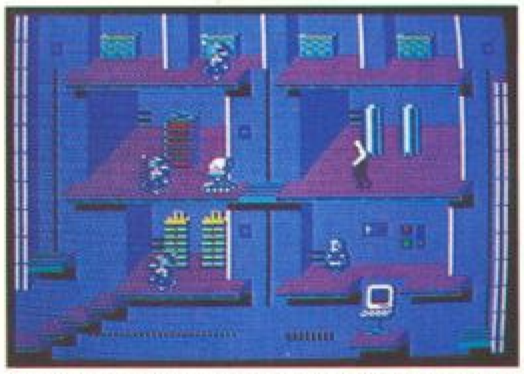


Using your pocket computer: you've only got one part of the three-number code needed to access other towers, so it's off again to search other rooms.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2

EPYX's new puzzler somersaults into action

WHEN a game has become as legendary as the original *Impossible Mission* it makes the question of a follow-up a tricky one; do you go for something completely original, and risk disappointing fans of the first game, or do you stick as closely as possible to the winning formula, relying on its playability and addictive qualities for success?



Inside one of Elvin's many rooms, you've got to zip around and search all the objects, somersaulting the gaps and using the vertical lift (on the right of the screen) to make your way up and down.

Epyx have chosen the second, and safer, course. And perhaps they're right to do so. Fans of the *IM 1* will feel as if they're resuming a compulsive game after a gap that's been far too long; newcomers to the world of evil megalomaniac Elvin Atombender will get sucked right into the excitement.

As before, you control a secret agent running and somersaulting around the web of tunnels and rooms erected by Elvin the evil genius. You need to search the robot-infested rooms to find extra weapons, codes to access other towers and – most important of all – the musical clues which will allow you to prevent Elvin destroying the world.

Within the rooms you're into a kind of platform game, somersaulting from platform to platform and elevator to elevator to avoid the robots and search for the obects. But the game also has its puzzle element; using your icon-driven pocket computer (presumably not a Psion Organiser) you need to investigate the clues and assemble the puzzles.

Elvin's fortress is a pretty sizeable place, and it's not to going to be a piece of cake investigating all his towers – access to each one depends on finding the correct codes. And solving the whole puzzle and saving the earth depends on collecting the musical bits and playing them on your tape recorder. All in all it certainly isn't going to be solved in half an hour...

Impossible Mission 2 isn't going to win any prizes for originality; it's too obviously a continuation of the first game. But if you're a fan that isn't going to bother you one little bit, and if you're not then you probably ought to take a look and see what all the fuss is about.

● Pete Connor

RELEASE BOX

SPEC	£8.99cs	OUT NOW
AMS	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs, £11.99dk	SUMMER
ATARI ST	Undecided	SUMMER

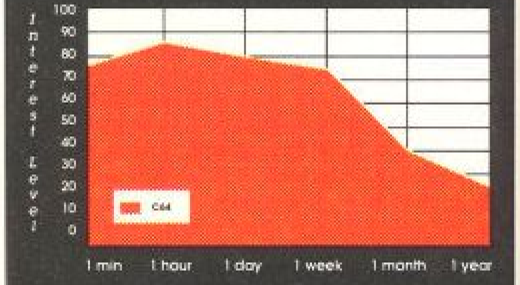
C64 VERSION

Excellent animation of your running, somersaulting figure, and the resounding footfalls as you hurry along corridors mean the game does pretty well on the graphics and sound side. And there's still that horrible scream as you fall to your death...

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 785

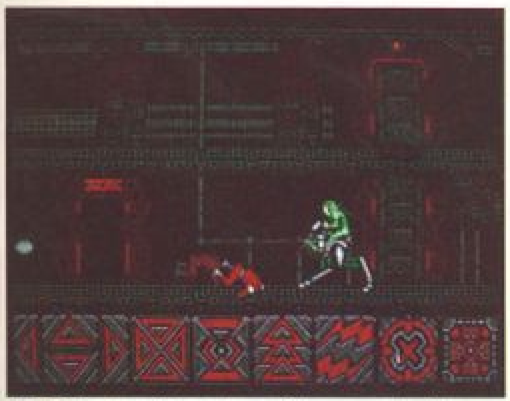
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



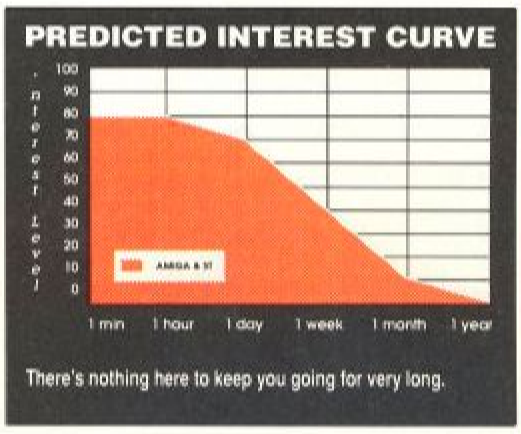
Enthralling in the short-term, and you'll return to it to trash Elvin over and over again.

OBLITERATOR

PSYGNOSIS get repetitive



ST - Drak goes rolling past one of the many ugly aliens.



There's nothing here to keep you going for very long.

ARCADE adventures can frustrate, enthrall and keep you struggling for months trying to finish them. *Obliterator*, however, can only manage to frustrate – and for all the wrong reasons.

The player controls a central character called Drak who has to scour the innards of a vast alien ship for five vital components. Find and remove the components, then quickly return to the escape shuttle and you'll have completed the game. Control of your character is mainly through a series of icons at the base of the screen (just like *Barbarian*), representing actions such as halt, jump, shoot and defend. Again, as with *Barbarian*, how your character reacts will depend to a certain extent on his previous actions – a standing Drak asked to defend will sidestep a bullet or monster whereas a running Drak (he has to run everywhere, it seems) will produce a spectacular forward roll when asked to defend (a very handy method for getting past monsters you can't kill with your current weapons).

You've got four weapons to choose from, but you'll have to find three of them around the ship – plus, of course, ammo.

ATARI ST VERSION

Not surprisingly, the game's almost identical to the Amiga version. Sound is not as good as the Amiga version, but that's only to be expected.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 5

ACE RATING 570

AMIGA VERSION

Wonderful graphics and some very good sound can't mask the game's terrible gameplay and glitches. The fact that it probably won't take you long to finish the game doesn't help its P.I.C. rating either.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 5

ACE RATING 570

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW

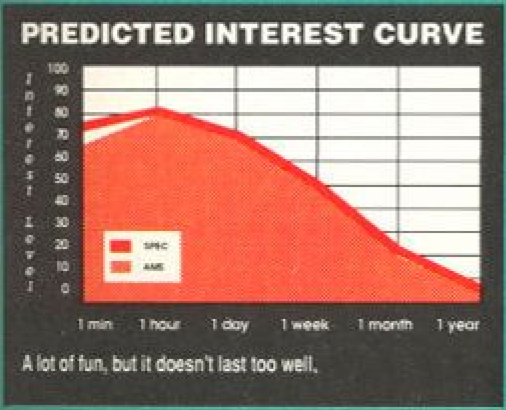
What really lets *Obliterator* down is the same set of problems that marred *Barbarian's* gameplay. The screen flips excruciatingly slowly from location to location and the collision detection is appalling. Comparing a company's new game with one of their past efforts is unavoidable in *Obliterator's* case. *Barbarian* was hardly an outstanding game – and neither is *Obliterator*.

● Andy Smith

GOTHIK

FIREBIRD in the dark ages

OLGA is a dab hand at casting spells and firing magical weapons while Olaf is pretty deft when it comes to archery, so you'll have to think carefully before you choose which one to take into the tower rooms of this epic arcade adventure. Your gruesome quest is to reassemble a kind old druid's skeleton and bring him back to life, but the evil lord responsible for the druid's death in the first place – well, he's not going to be too happy about this. Given that he's in charge of a whole horde of gorillas, giant ants, dragons and other nasties, this could all get a bit serious.



A lot of fun, but it doesn't last too well.

RELEASE BOX

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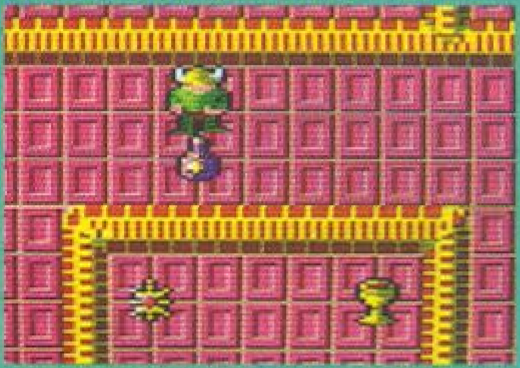
AMS	£8.95cs, £14.95dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.95cs, £12.95dk	IMMINENT



AMSTRAD - Heroic Olaf's found a potion, but what will it do if he picks it up?

There's a strong *Gauntlet* look to the proceedings thanks to the (more or less) overhead view, the critters and the shooting, but overall the game's a good deal more complex than this suggests. There are three different weapons available to you: bow and arrow, which speaks for itself; lightning bolt, a magical ricocheting weapon useful for clearing rooms out without entering them and putting yourself at risk; and fireball, a variable-strength magic weapon which can kill nasties, clear a path through the game's obstructive clumps of bracken and even blast holes in walls.

SPECTRUM VERSION

The playing area's not terribly colourful, but there's very little clash and the main characters are drawn and animated very well, with bags of humour.

GRAPHICS 6 IQ FACTOR 4
AUDIO 3 FUN FACTOR 7

ACE RATING 618

AMSTRAD VERSION

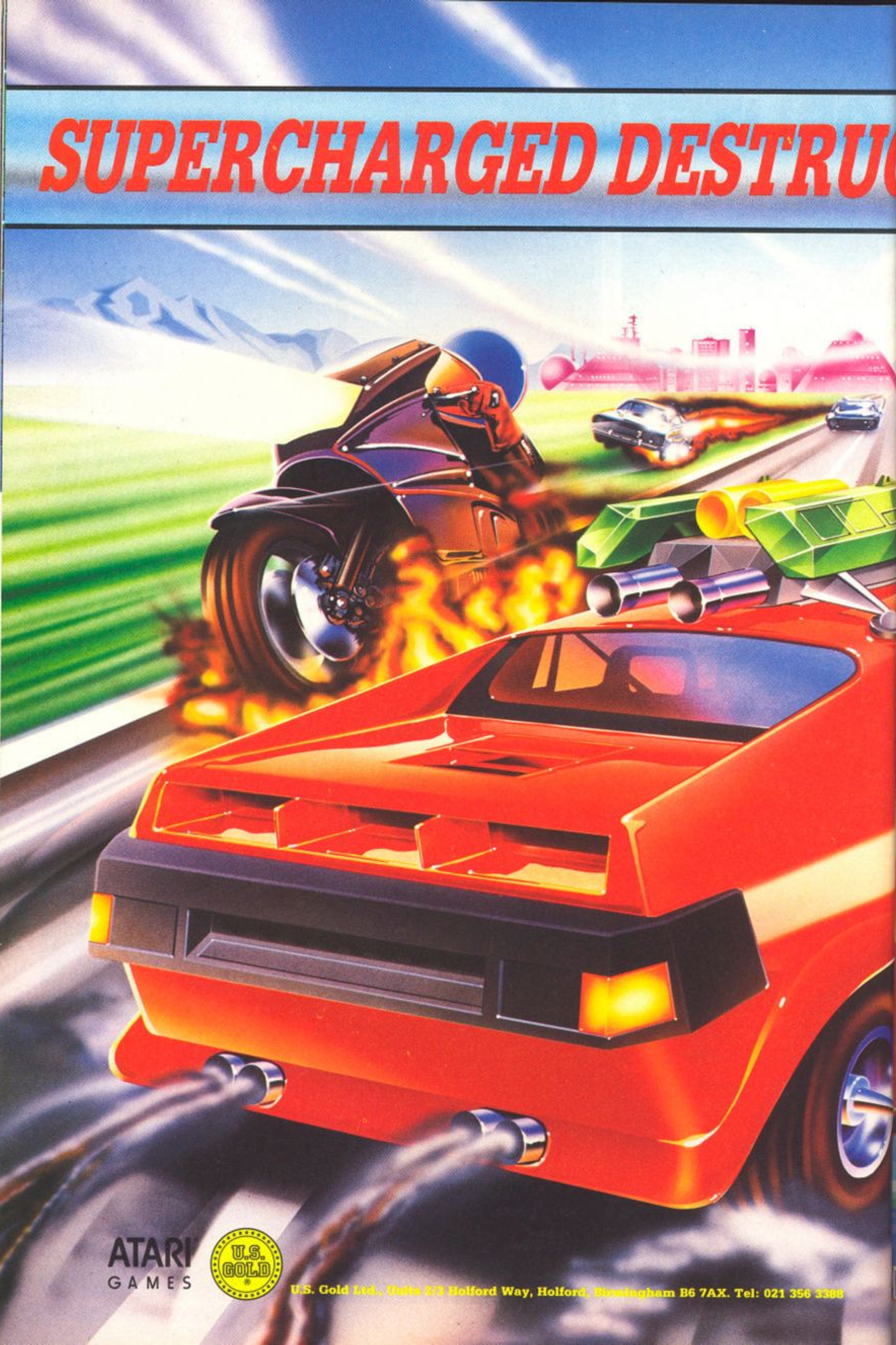
Great colour and very nice hardware scrolling make this a treat to look at, but the animation's not all it might be.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 4
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 7

ACE RATING 606

Add to this various magical relics, several dozen different potions and some vital resources to maintain and you've got a tough-ish, very playable game. Earth-shatteringly original it isn't, but there's no need to let that put you off.

● Andy Wilton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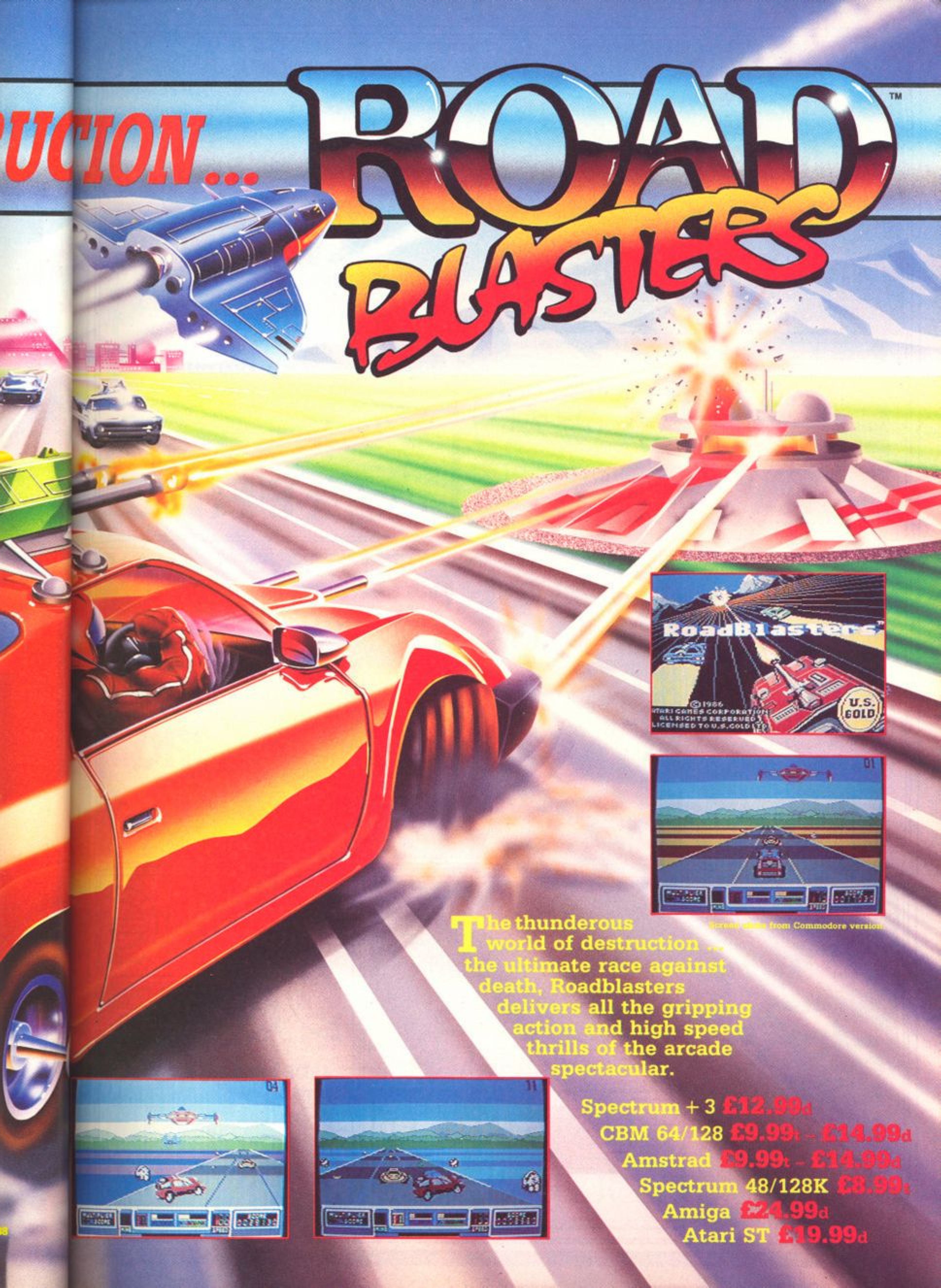
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Screen shots from Commodore version

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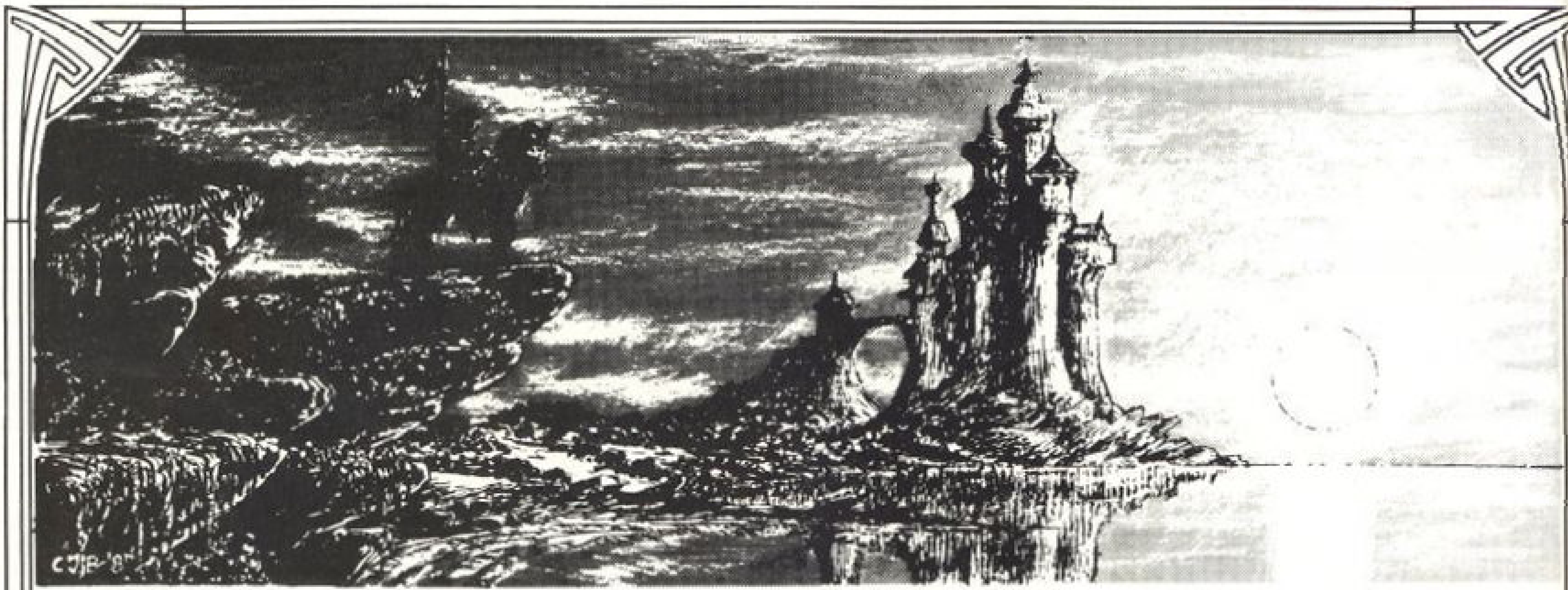

AVALON

THE KNIGHTS OF THE AVALON

The Chronicles of 'THE KNIGHTS OF THE AVALON' is a fantasy-based Play By Mail game from JADE Games, where players seek to establish, through trade, colonisation, politics, religion and conquest, empires.

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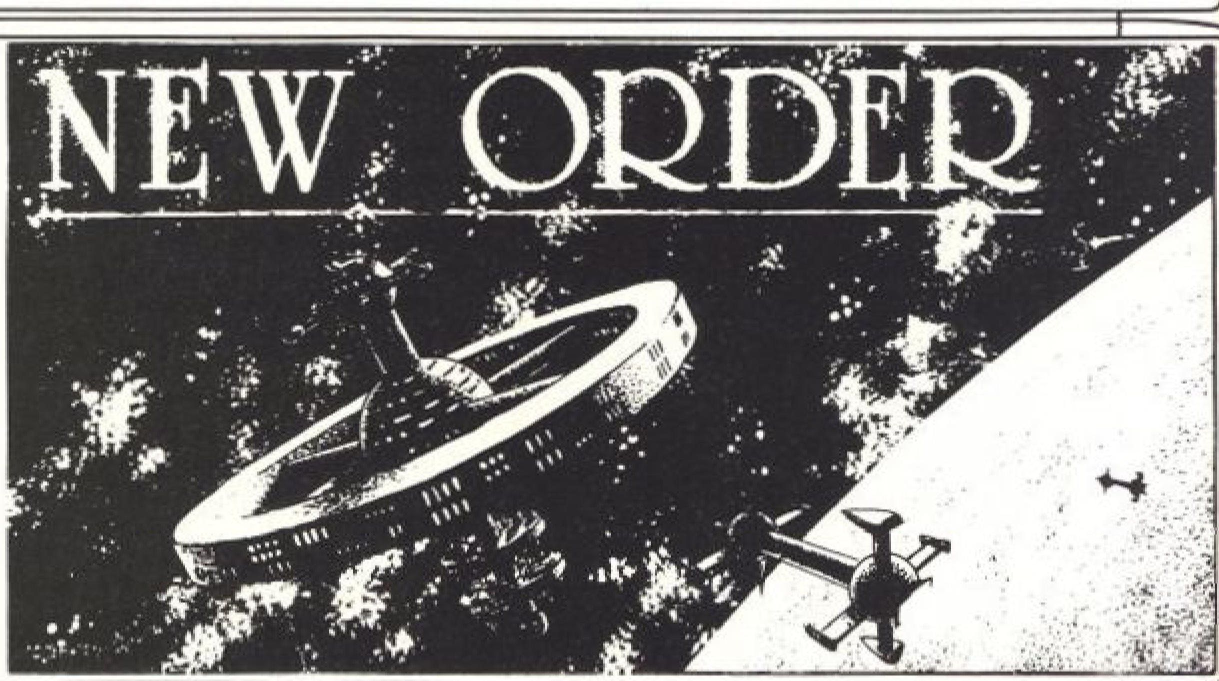

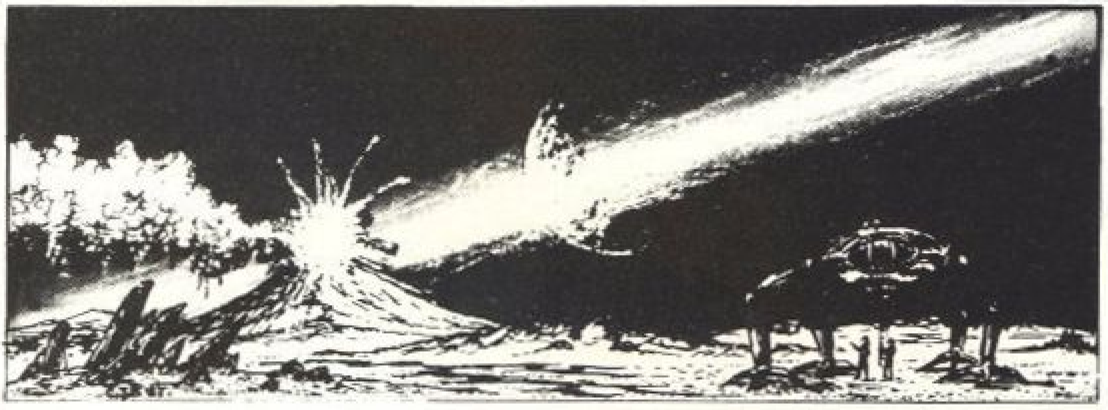

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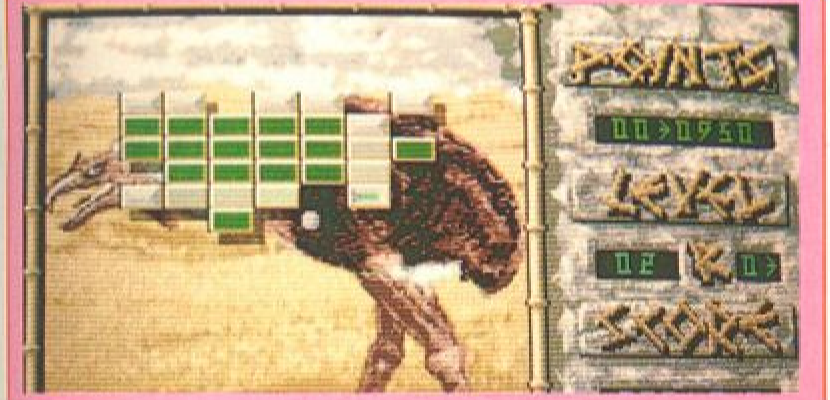
CRACK

Prehistoric formula from LINEL



BOUNCE-em-ups don't come much prettier than this, with colourful prehistoric backdrops and an opening sequence which always raises a smile. In the final analysis, though, how many different ways are there to knock a few coloured blocks off a screen? 150 in *Crack*, plus a further *700* if you resort to the built-in construction set. You get the usual range of collectable benefits, plus neat 2-player and 'battle' modes, but the gameplay is neither difficult nor complex – and it turns out you get the same eight backgrounds cycling round again and again. A game you'll play for hours – it takes you that long to lose all your lives.

● Rod Lawton

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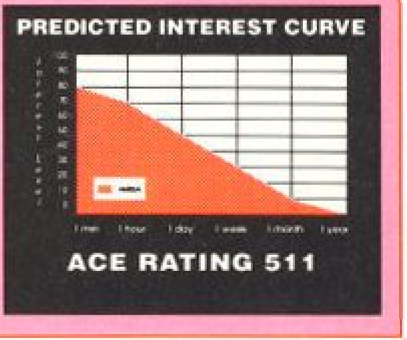

ACE RATING 511

GUTZ

OCEAN's tummy trouble

INNARDS have been popular in coin-ops for some time, and now Special FX have given you the unenviable task of blasting your way around the tripes of a massive space monster. Unenviable not just because no-one in their right minds wants to tangle with a monster's intestines, but because the game is just an old-fashioned arcade adventure, as you search levels for keys and weapons while blasting the inhabitants of the stomach.

● Pete Connor

RELEASE BOX		
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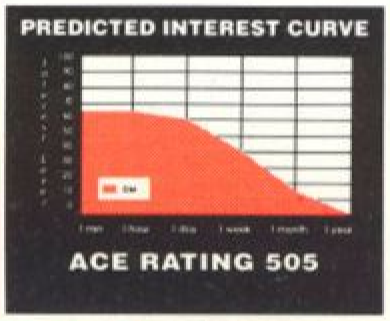
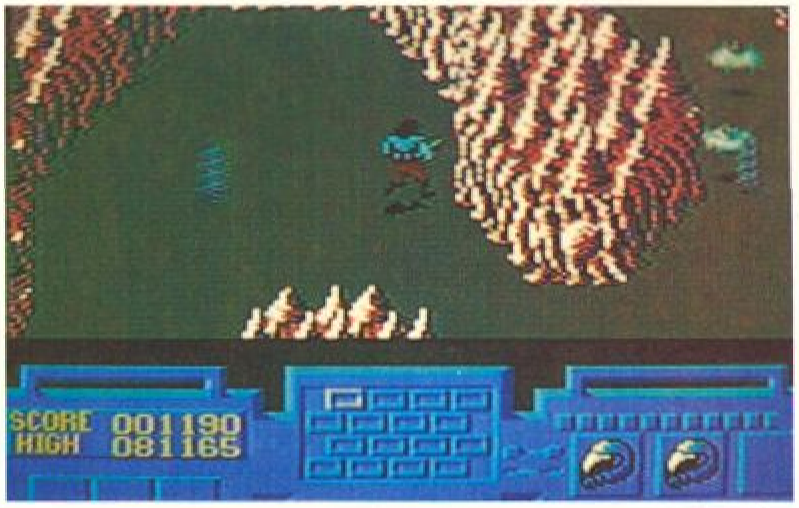
SPEC	£7.95cs, £14.95dk	IMMINENT



ACE RATING 505

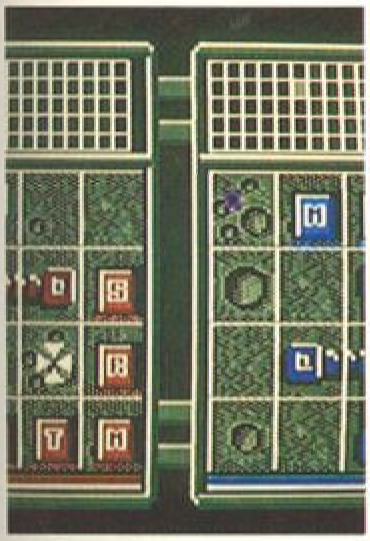


CORPORATION

ACTIVISION mined their own business

ASTEROID mining is the name of the game in *Corporation*, and you've got several Mobile Robotic Units to carry out the task. You're competing against another organisation (controlled by the computer or another player) for the asteroid's limited resources, so you have to decide in which machinery to invest your capital. Should you go for more mining units, or more rocket launchers to protect your forces? There's plenty to think about here and it's quite fun but you'll soon tire of it.

● Andy Smith



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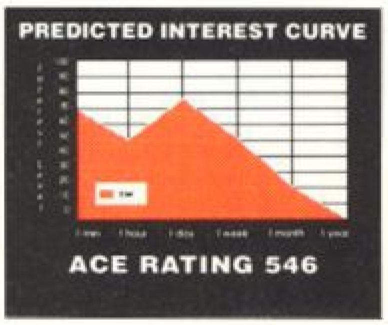
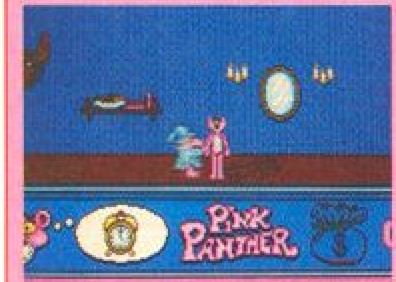


ACE RATING 546

PINK PANTHER

Pink mayhem from GREMLIN



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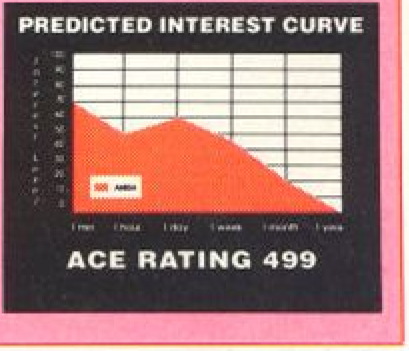
SPEC	£8.99cs, £12.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs, £12.99dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	IMMINENT

SLEEPWALKING employers, collectable objects and lurking Clouseaus are the ingredients for this routine arcade adventure. Stop your master bumping into walls and furniture while you ransack his house of valuables. Let him wake up, and you get your collar felt by the Inspector. There are five levels to complete and a host of gadgets the Pink Panther (you) can use to help him on his way. It's all pretty enough, but the graphics are nothing special by 16-bit standards and the soundtrack is a pale (pink?) imitation of the Mancini original. 'Nuff said.

● Rod Lawton



ACE RATING 499

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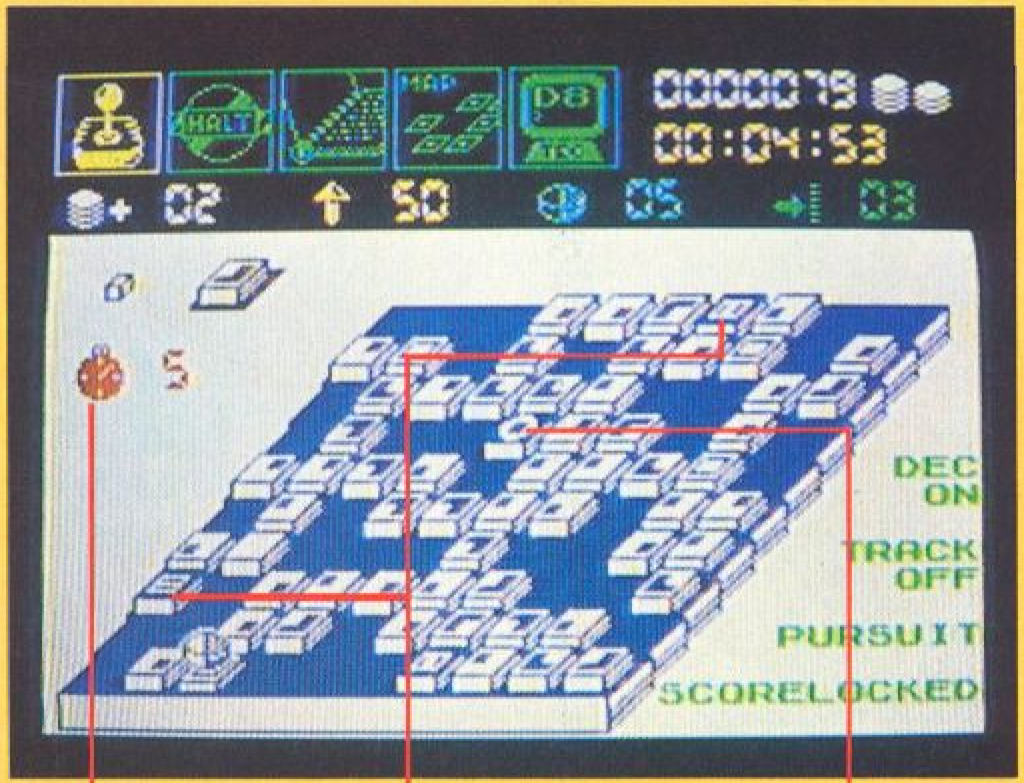
ISOMETRIC 3D games may be old hat, but it's safe to say that no-one's ever done one quite like this before. CRL seem to think it's a boardgame of some sort but actually it's more of an arcade adventure crossed with a puzzle.

The game area spans 20 levels, each with 20 or so screens to them. You start with access to only the first five levels, the aim of the game being to open up the locks between the remaining levels until you've got access to the whole thing. You can open the levels either by exploration – there are 64 keys scattered around the layout, enough to finish the game with – or by building your score up and using the points as currency to 'buy' the locks open.

The layout and object of the game may be fairly straightforward, but the low-level gameplay really is distinctly odd. Once you're on a screen, the main difficulty is getting off it again without losing lives. Typically the entrance from the previous screen locks itself behind you, while other exits have their problems too. On some screens you'll need to survive a certain length of time to unlock the exits, while others require you to score a certain number of points before you can leave.

The main method of scoring is movement: each block you bounce onto gives you points according to a symbol on its surface with one, the 'target' block, being the most valuable of all. The target moves every time you land on it, so it'll have you chasing all round the screen if you're determined to gain points fast. Targets become vital on screens with descending blocks, where hopping on the same block twice will kill you: landing on a target resets the screen, opening up routes around the block layout that you'd closed off.



If the clock reaches zero while you're still en route to the target, you lose a life.

These exits would take you to other screens, but you've not scored enough points on this one to unlock them yet.

This is the target – you'll score 20 points if you land on this, and reset the clock.

A 'Pursuit' screen

SOPHISTRY

CRL produce a puzzler

Ten types of special screen with extra difficulties to them will help keep you on your toes. Some have time limits within which you've got to get off the screen; some have 'chains' of descending blocks that pursue you; while others feature timing problems or blocks that disappear behind you. Mystery blocks can give you handy extra points, unleash alien 'seekers' to hunt you down, or open screen exits for you.

This one's a pleasingly unconventional departure for CRL, but somehow its various interesting parts don't quite gel the way they might. There's mapping and route-planning if you like that side of things, while timing and similar problems offer an arcade challenge. The game task is big enough to keep you busy for a while too. It's just that for much of the game there's no urgency or immediate danger to hold your attention. Subsequent screens all look much the same, only a handful of them are really taxing and an in-game information feature lists all the different screens you can come across, so there's not the incentive to go exploring that the game needs.

● Andy Wilton

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SPEC	£7.95cs	OUT NOW
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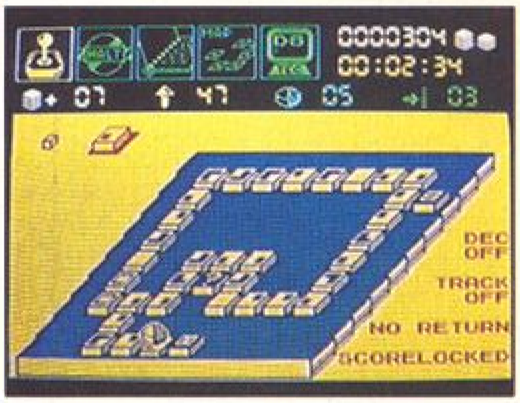


A 'No Return' screen:
The blocks disappear behind you so you can't turn back, and you must earn enough points to open the exits before you reach them.

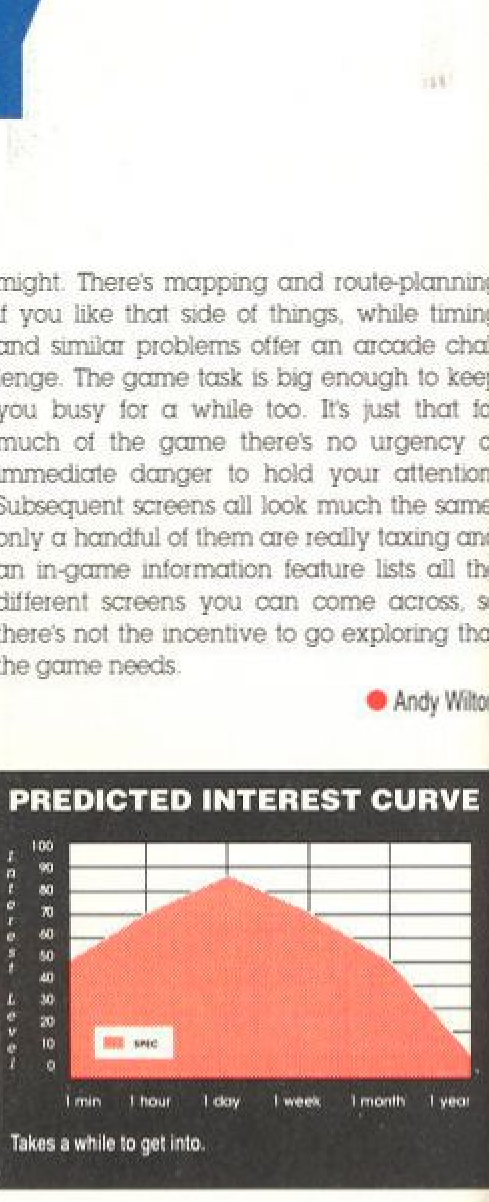
SPECTRUM VERSION

A quirky icon-driven front end can be annoying and the printed instructions are none too good, but the game looks and plays fine.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	2

ACE RATING 724

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



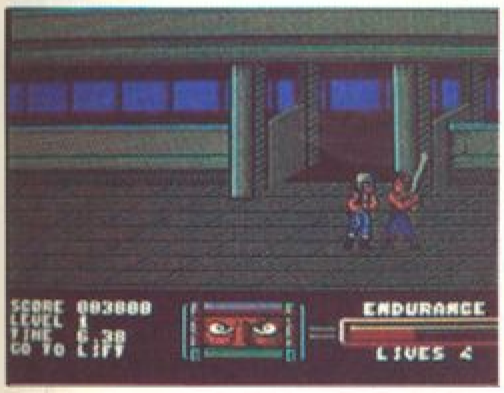
Takes a while to get into.

TARGET; RENEGADE

IMAGINE go clubbing

SCUMVILLE is not a nice place to live in. Never mind the unemployment problems or the lack of recreational facilities, it would appear that most of the youth population hang out in one of five kinds of gang, all under the influence of the nefarious 'Mr Big.'

You've got to bash your way through these five gangs if you wish to confront said Mr Big and knock the living daylights out of him for doing the same to your brother.



C64 - you're one mean baseball bat-wielding hombre.

Each gang is identifiable in that its members all belong to the same sub-culture. The first gang you'll meet are the bikers, some of whom wield clubs, but all of whom are out to see you don't get to keep your date with the head honcho. Should you survive the bikers' onslaught, you'll have some very vicious pimps and equally vicious tarts to smash your way through before you come up against the skinheads. Defeat these and next up for some pummelling are a bunch of lads and their dogs. Polish them off and you're on Mr Big's turf, where you'll have to dispose of his bodyguards before you get a chance at the big man himself.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£8.95cs, £12.95dk	OUT NOW
SPEC	£7.95cs, £14.95dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£8.95cs, £14.95dk	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

C64 VERSION

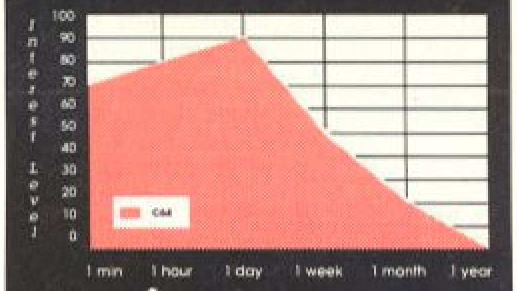
Wonderful graphics and a choice of music or sound effects make this a well polished game that's sadly lacking on the difficulty front once you've learnt how to dispose of the various bad guys (or gals).

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8
ACE RATING 653

All in all, *Target; Renegade* is very similar to *Renegade* but with better graphics and trickier gameplay. A tough and addictive game, but one that probably won't take you too long to complete.

● Andy Smith

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Short-lived excitement.

BEYOND THE ICE PALACE

ELITE's cold comfort

EVIL is about again, and it's your job to deal with it. As the hero of the piece you'll have to run and leap across the four-way scrolling levels of ladders, steps and platforms, wiping out bucketfuls of nasties on the way.

At the start of play you can choose between the game's three weapons - morning star, sword or dagger - and you can also change to one or another at various points along the way. The morning star makes short work of marauding bats and the sword's better for dealing with wandering goblins - the dagger isn't much use at all!

Your only object in all this is progress: get past the next obstacle, leap the next gap and so on to the end of the level. Obstacles include the set-piece lift problems and nasty, blue, heavily armoured flying creatures. Timing and co-ordination are the key to the former, but to combat those blue meanies and other nasties you can summon a spirit to assist you for short periods - it floats around you, wearing down or killing bad guys.

All very competent stuff, but lacking something compared to *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* or *Thundercats*. Maybe it's that the controls aren't quite so good, or that you can get caught in death loops too easily - or just that the whole game style's too long in the tooth.

● Andy Wilton

RELEASE BOX

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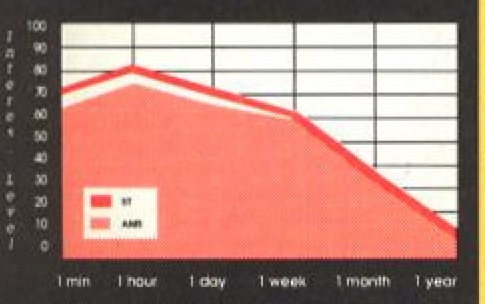
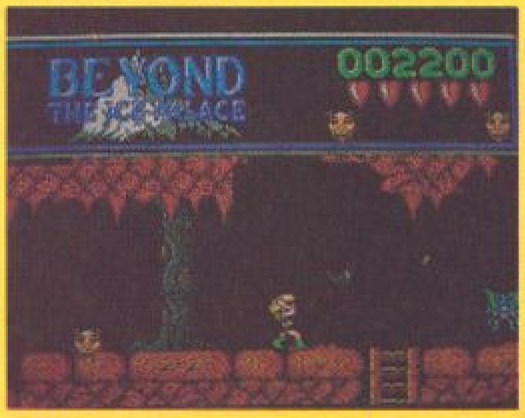
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Never manages to grab your undivided attention.



ST - Feeling heroic? Then try killing that tough blue monster with your morning star!

ATARI ST VERSION

It's a shame to knock a perfectly respectable conversion, but really this has very little to offer over the Amstrad version. The ST can handle big, complex games with depth and real lasting interest: why use it to play 8-bit stuff like this?

GRAPHICS 6 IQ FACTOR 2
AUDIO 6 FUN FACTOR 7
ACE RATING 677

AMSTRAD VERSION

Graphically excellent, the game does seem to suffer a little from sluggish controls. Not to worry - it's still very playable, and it does look good.

GRAPHICS 6 IQ FACTOR 2
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 6
ACE RATING 648

There are some tremendous conversions heading your way this month. Can Amstrad owners afford to miss *Nebulus*? Would Amiga owners be so dumb as to pass up *Bubble Bobble*? Should C64 owners ignore *Magnetron*? Things aren't always so rosy though, as a game may be great on one machine but awful on another. Check out how the latest hits have converted to your machine by reading the ACE updates pages before you shell out on a poor conversion.

SPECTRUM

CRAZY CARS

Titus £9.95cs

This car driving game was quite a looker on the Amiga, but unfortunately the game was far too easy to hold your interest for any great length of time. The Spectrum version has some good graphics too and the scrolling is fine, but again this game's just too easy to beat, which means the game just doesn't hold your interest for anything like long enough.

● ACE RATING 690

AMIGA

BARBARIAN

Palace £19.99dk

Well, it's been a long time coming across to the Amiga, and frankly the wait wasn't worth it. The extra sound and colour in the backgrounds aren't particularly noticeable and the game itself shouldn't take you longer than a week to complete. The two-player option does little to pep up the interest level, so though the game's amusing in the short term, there's nothing much here to make you want to come back to it time and time again.

● ACE RATING 419

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird £19.95dk
C64 version reviwed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 958
Atari ST Version reviewed Issue 5 - ACE rating 958

For their first coin-op conversion, Firebird certainly chose well. Those two bubble blowing, banana eating Brontosauri have been a great success on every machine they've been converted to. The Amiga version of this arcade classic is still just as addictive, frustrating and playable as the other versions. *Bubble Bobble* is one of the best arcade conversions we're probably ever likely to see.

● ACE RATING 958

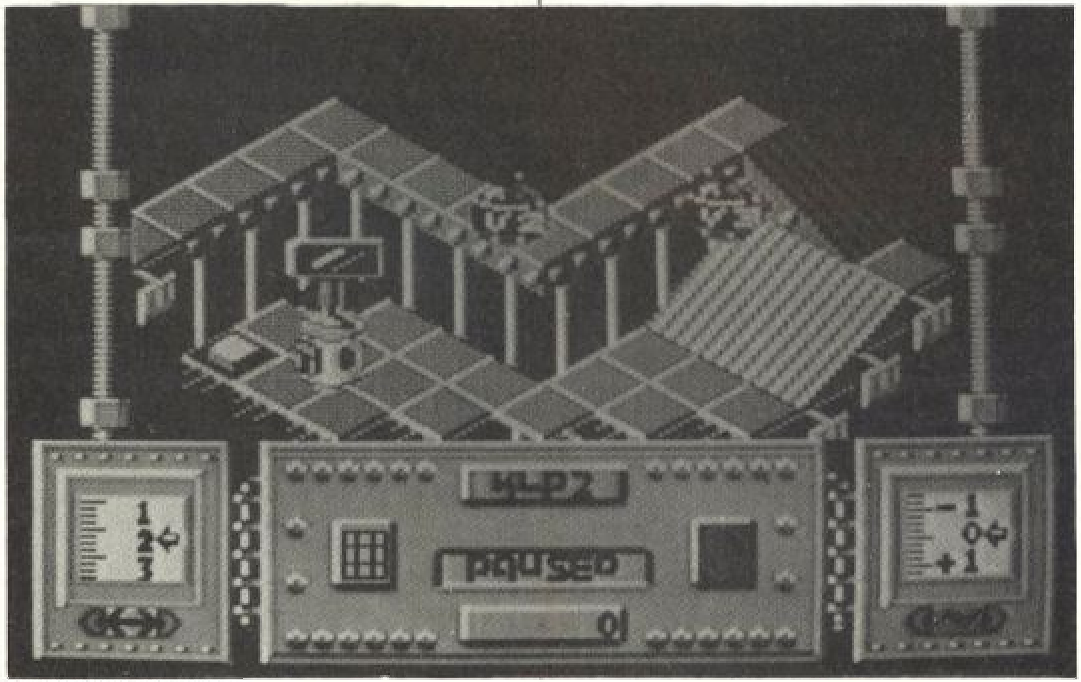
C64

MAGNETRON

Firebird £8.95cs £12.95dk
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 8 - ACE Rating 904

This terrific droid-em-up is just as entertaining on the C64 as it is on the Spectrum. You start the game as a lowly KLP-2 class droid and you've got a huge task ahead of you. You've got to shut down the reactors of eight nuclear satellites that are threatening Earth's spacefleet. This is tough for a simple KLP-2 so your first job is beef yourself up using parts hacked from the hundreds of enemy droids. Great graphics and gameplay make this well worthy of the high rating.

● ACE Rating 904



C64 version of Magnetron

ATARI ST

NORTHSTAR

Gremlin £19.99dk
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 7 - ACE Rating 680

This smooth sideways scroller is just as pretty on the ST as it was on the Amstrad. The tune that plays throughout is alright but nothing special and generally the game's made the transition well. *Northstar* has unoriginal gameplay that lets you slip and slide all over the shop, zapping baddies with your extendable robotic arm and collecting extra weapons. but it provides simple, playable fun that should keep you interested for a while.

● ACE RATING 700

AMSTRAD

DARK SCEPTRE

Firebird £8.95cs £14.95dk
Spectrum Version reviewed Issue 4 - ACE Rating 856

Reapers, assasins, fools and other such wonderful characters are now abroad on the Amstrad. Though the screens are more colourful than the Spectrum version, the gameplay is not so good. The characters stomp jerkily around at a terribly slow pace. This does tend to ruin the game to some extent which is a shame. If you don't mind slow gameplay then you'll find a large and entertaining quest awaits in *Dark Sceptre*.

● ACE RATING 740

NEBULUS

Hewson £9.95cs £14.95dk
C64 version reviewed Issue 4 - ACE Rating 943
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 4 - ACE Rating 917

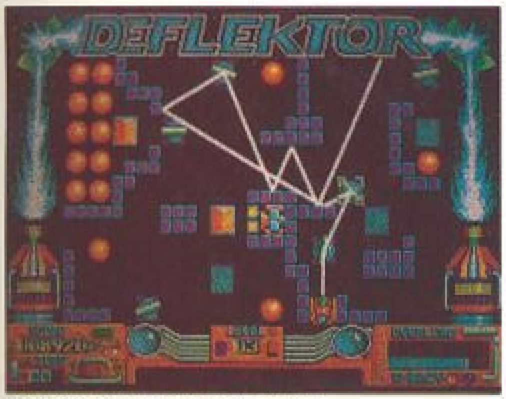
Pogo makes it to the CPC in style. Like the Spectrum version, you don't get the chance to catch fish between levels but that detracts little from the sheer addictive challenge of this superb game. If you're after a game that's going to test the ol' grey matter but still be tremendously playable - then look no further.

● ACE RATING 935

DEFLEKTOR

UPDATE SPECIAL

ATARI ST ● Gremlin £19.99dk



Tripping the light fantastic in *Deflektor.*

First came the Spectrum version (reviewed in Issue 4) which gained a well earned ACE rating of 906. The C64 version was swift to follow and was just as deserving of the high rating. Now the game makes its appearance on the ST.

For those unfamiliar with *Deflektor*, the plot is simply explained. There is no great scenario, you're no particular hero saving the world from imminent destruction, all you are is a humble games-player trying to complete a very tricky but addictive puzzle. *Deflektor* consists of many screens, each of which contains a laser beam transmitter and receiver, plus some cells left behind by gremlins. All you have to do is ensure the laser beam travels from transmitter to receiver and that all the cells are destroyed by the beam. Sounds simple enough, but it's very tough in practice. The transmitter and receiver are often not aligned so you'll have to use mirrors, polarisers and fibre-optic conduits to bend the beam in order to destroy the cells and make the connection. You only have a limited amount of time to clear each screen before you lose a life, and should you lose three lives on any one screen, well it's game over. Just to spice things up a bit, some sections of the screen will cause the transmitter to overload should you happen to leave the beam on them for any length of time, and there are usually bombs – awkwardly placed – that will have the same effect. You'll have to be thinking on your feet throughout this tremendously addictive, tremendously playable game that's well worth a look at whatever your machine.

● **Andy Smith**

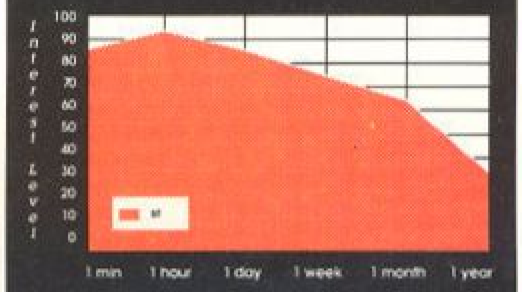
ATARI ST VERSION

The graphics and music are both fine, and the game plays just as well as the 8-bit versions. This is the sort of thing that makes owning a home computer such fun.

GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 8
AUDIO 7 **FUN FACTOR** 7

ACE RATING 906

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Brainy stuff that's horribly addictive.

FALCON

UPDATE SPECIAL

IBM PC ● Mirrorsoft £34.99 – on 3.5" and 5.25" disks

Flight simulators have long been the mainstay of upmarket American games houses, so an F-16 Fighting Falcon combat sim was a natural enough step for Spectrum Holobyte. We took a look at a Macintosh version of the game for our flight sims special in ACE Issue 5, but the arrival of the PC version earns this weighty title a fresh look.

Make no mistake, this game is the real thing. You can bomb or dogfight on any of a dozen highly believable missions, with handling characteristics modelled very closely on real life. The hefty manual details turning radius against height and speed, gives you the low-down on avoiding MIGs or SAMs and deals very thoroughly with the various weapons you yourself can unleash.

This is all a bit much to take in right away of course, but Spectrum Holobyte have thought of that too. By selecting a rank for yourself you choose just how realistic you want the game to be. Fly out as a First Lieutenant and the whole thing's a doddle with unlimited weapons, an engine you can't stall and a plane that doesn't crash when you hit the ground at speed: promote yourself all the way up to colonel on the other hand and you've got an enormous job on your hands just staying airborne.

For a game that's so very combat-orientated – *Falcon* is definitely for fighters rather than just flying fans – there's an encouraging lack of Microprose-style jingoism. You'll find so much to learn and do with this one, plus some wonderful extras – a two-player machine link-up option for example, and a great 3D flight replay feature – that really help make the game something special. An essential purchase for fast-jet fans.

● **Andy Wilton**

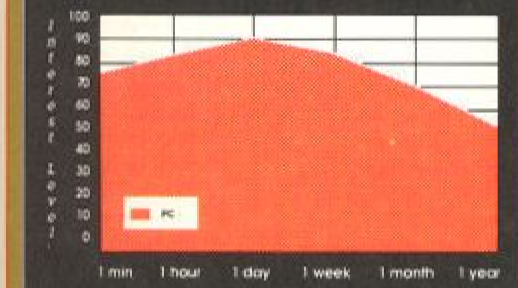
IBM PC VERSION

The solid-fill CGA graphics aren't the fastest thing ever, but they certainly look good. There's no EGA option yet (but see pages 34 – 35 for news) so you're stuck with cyan and purple even on an Amstrad 1640. Runs fine with *PC Outline* installed though!

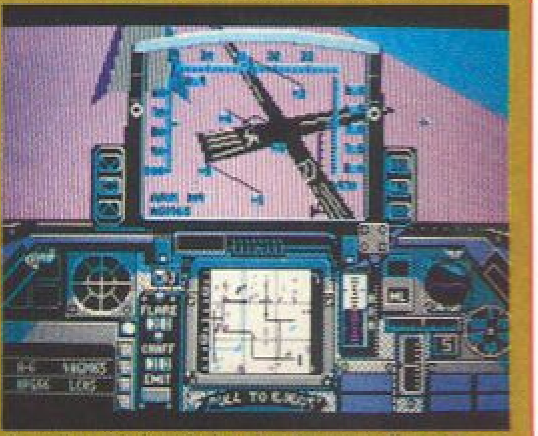
GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 9
AUDIO 3 **FUN FACTOR** 7

ACE RATING 939

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



With a dozen missions at any of five ranks, there's an awful lot to get through!



As well as this front-facing view the game offers side and rear-quarter ones, including the bits of the cockpit interior that you'd see in real life. Handy for keeping an eye on bandits, but you'll need to face front to see your all-important HUD unit.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

Tips galore this month, including a superb players' guide to *Dungeon Master* plus some of those elusive *Bonecruncher* passwords. There 's also a heap of pokes including infinite lives for *Masters of the Universe* and *Pacland* and infinite energy for *Bangkok Knights*.

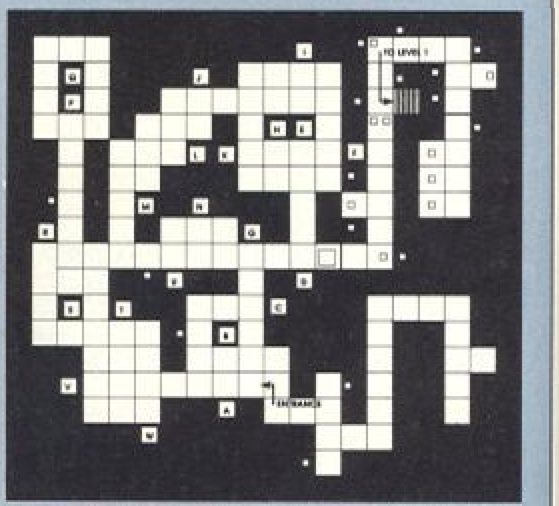
DUNGEON MASTER

This magnificent role-playing quest will take some beating – so it's essential you start off properly. Here, courtesy of Robert Newton of Sherwood and Richard Yarnall of Chesterfield, comes all the information you'll need to choose a strong party and find your way around the first level.

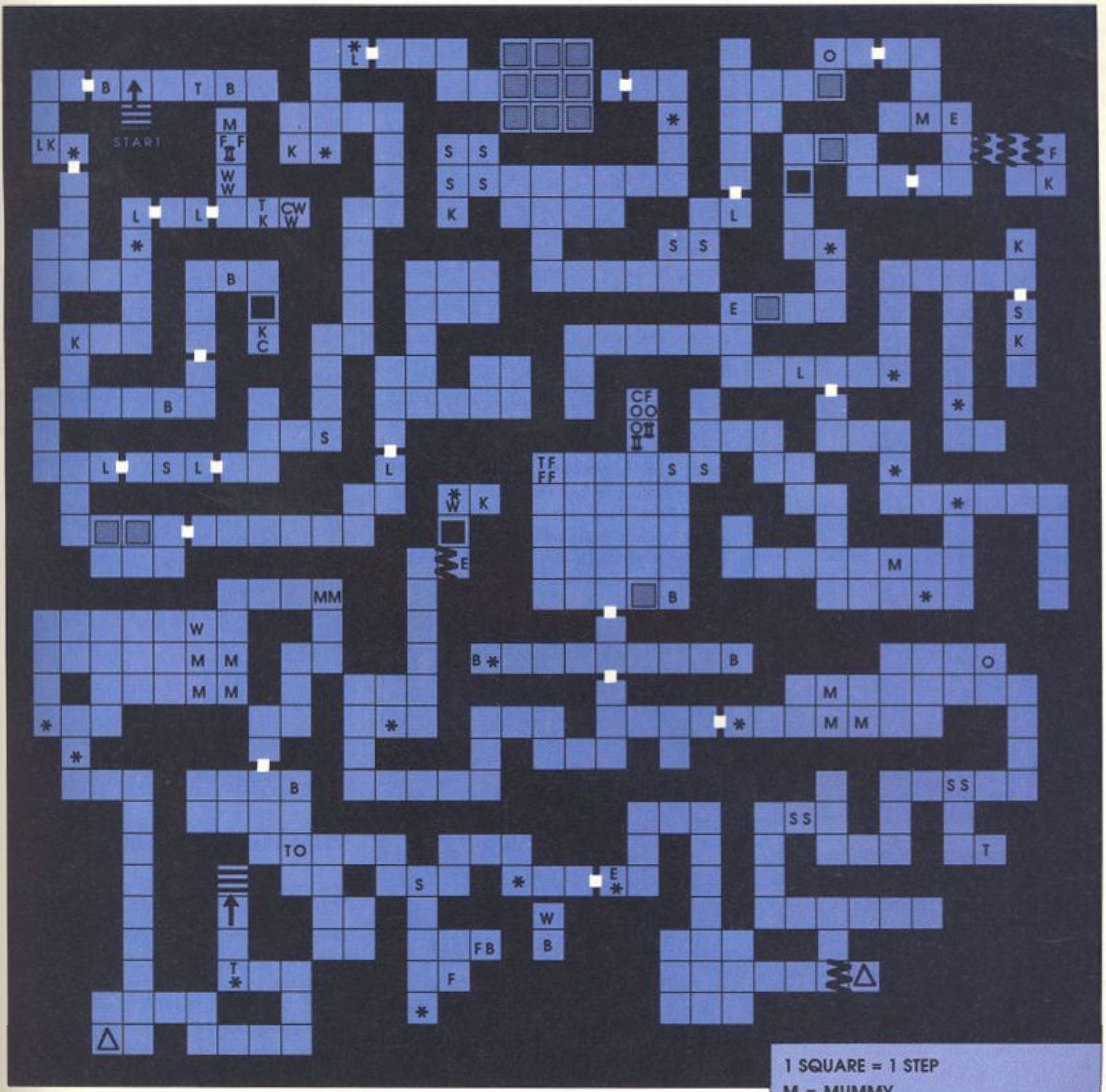
LIST OF CHAMPIONS

A list of champions and their skills. The numbers for each character refer to Health, Stamina, and Mana levels respectively. Use the map to locate their positions.

a)	IAIDO RUYITO CHIBURI – Apprentice fighter, novice priest	48, 65, 11
b)	ZED DUKE OF BANVILLE – Novice fighter, novice ninja, novice priest, novice wizard	60, 60, 10
c)	ELIJA LION OF YAITOPYA – Novice fighter, apprentice priest	60, 58, 22
d)	HALK THE BARBARIAN – Journeyman fighter	90, 75, 0
e)	WU TSE SON OF HEAVEN – Novice ninja, apprentice priest	45, 47, 20
f)	DAROOU – Apprentice fighter, neophyte wizard	100, 65, 6
g)	SYRA CHILD OF NATURE – Novice priest, apprentice wizard	53, 72, 15
h)	LEIF THE VALIANT – Apprentice fighter, novice priest	75, 70, 7
i)	AZIZI JOHARI – Novice fighter, apprentice ninja	61, 77, 7
j)	STAAM BLADECASTER – Journeyman fighter	75, 80, 0
k)	TIGGY TAMAL – Novice ninja, apprentice wizard	25, 45, 36
l)	WUUF THE BIKA – Apprentice ninja, novice priest	40, 50, 30
m)	LEYLA SHADOWSEEK – Journeyman ninja	48, 60, 3
n)	GANDO THURFOOT – Apprentice ninja, novice wizard	39, 63, 26
o)	SONJA SHE DEVIL – Journeyman fighter	65, 70, 2
p)	HISSSA LIZARD OF MAKAN – Apprentice fighter, novice ninja	80, 61, 5
q)	GOTHMOG – Journeyman wizard	60, 55, 18
r)	NABI THE PROPHET – Apprentice priest, novice wizard	55, 65, 15
s)	ALEX ANDER – Apprentice ninja, novice wizard	50, 57, 13
t)	BORIS WIZARD OF BALOOR – Novice ninja, apprentice wizard	35, 65, 28
u)	LINFLAS – Apprentice fighter, novice wizard	65, 50, 12
v)	HAWK THE FEARLWSS – Novice fighter, apprentice priest	70, 85, 10
w)	CHANI SAVVADINA SIHAYA – Novice fighter, apprentice wizard	47, 67, 20
x)	MOPHUS THE HEALER – Journeyman priest	55, 55, 19.



■ = WRITING ON THE WALL.
■ = FOOD OR WATER.
■ = MIRRORS CONTAINING HEROES.
■ = TORCHES.
■ = GRATES, HOOKS OR HANDLES.
■ = VI ALTAR OF REBIRTH.
■ = PRESSURE PAD.
▮ = WOODEN DOOR.



1 SQUARE = 1 STEP
M = MUMMY
S = SCREAMER
* = WATER FOUNTAIN
K = KEY
T = TORCH
F = FOOD (APPLE, CHEESE, WATER BREAD, CORN, DRUMSTICK.)
W = WEAPON (DAGGER, FALCHION THROWING STAR, ARROW ETC.)
C = CLOTHES
E = ENGRAVING ON WALL
Δ = CHEST
B = BUTTON OR SWITCH
L = LOCK
Ⅱ = SCROLL
O = USEFULL OBJECTS
≋ = FORCE FIELD
▢ = PRESSURE PAD
■ = HOLE
-■- = PORTCULLIS OR WOODEN DOOR

LIST OF SPELLS

These spells and their effects will prove useful later in the game.

Potion spells:
Cast VI into a flask for a healing potion
Cast YA into a flask for a stamina potion
Cast VI BRO into a flask for a curing potion
Cast FUL BRO KU into a flask for an added strength potion
Cast YA BRO DAIN into a flask for an added wisdom potion
Cast YA BRO NETA into a flask for an added vitality potion
Cast OH BRO ROS into a flask for an added dexterity potion
Cast YA BRO into a flask for a magical shield potion
Cast ZO VEN into a flask for a venom potion
Cast ZO BRO RA for a pure mana potion

Light/Dark potions:
Cast FUL for magical light
Cast OH IR RA for longer lasting light
Cast DES IR SAR for darkness

Protection spells:
Cast FUL BRO NETA for a fire shield
Cast YA IR for a group shield

Firepower spells:
Cast DES EW to weaken non-material beings
Cast OH VEN for a poison cloud
Cast FUL IR for a fireball
Cast OH KATH RA for a lightning bolt

Miscellaneous:
Cast ZO to open certain doors
Cast YA BRO ROS for magical footprints
Cast OH EW RA for magic vision

BATTLE VALLEY

This C64 poke will bless you with infinite ammo, rockets and energy – beware, though, of flying into scenery or falling off the bridge.

```
1 DATA
32,86,245,169,0,141,28,4,169,208,141,29,4
2 DATA
96,169,0,141,67,50,141,46,58,169,165,141
3 DATA 184,69,76,132,255,0,0
4 FOR L= 53234 TO 53263:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT
5 POKE 157,128:SYS 53263
```

THE HACKER, London.

MORPHEUS

Some weapons are useful, some aren't. These tips will save you hours of trial and error discovering which are which.

Solar Cells – the early versions are poor compared to Inertia Convertors but later versions are worth considering.

Energy Batteries and **High Energy Batteries** – unnecessary if you possess an Inertia Convertor.

E.C.M.'s – early versions are far too expensive and the later versions are useless if you have a disruptor.

Charge to Energy Convertors – a bargain.

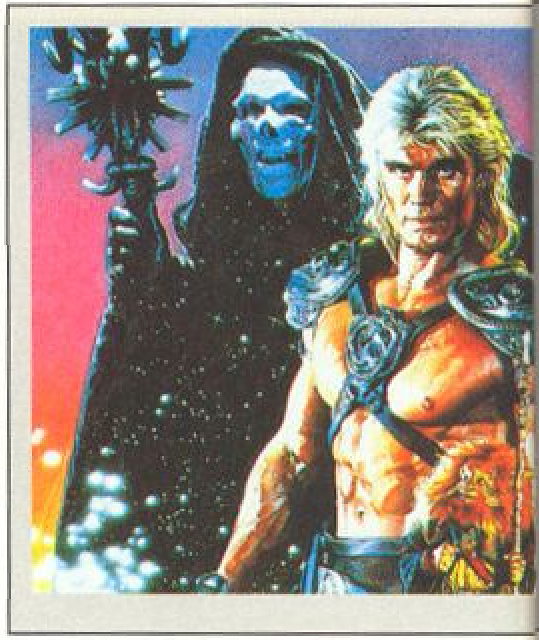
Mega Solar Cells – unnecessary if you have a Charge to Energy Convertor.

Energy Demat Units – useless, stay awake and keep your eye on your energy banks.

Charge Display Units – very limited usefulness.

Shield Generators – an essential purchase if you wish to progress past level 10.

Shield Replenishers – an essential purchase for use with Shield Generators.



Nucleus Finder – a bargain if you want those bonuses.

Inertia Convertor – extremely useful. Energy supply rate is dramatically increased if more than one convertor is fitted.

View Port – useless.

Shield Display Indicator – useless.

Charge Proximity Indicator – unnecessary. Use your radar.

Disruptor – essential, as it provides all-round protection. Fit more than one.

MARTYN ARIF, London.

BONECRUNCHER

This Superior puzzler may be proving too tricky for you, so here's the majority of the passwords.

Level 2 = GOLEMSTENCH: **Level 3** = MORPHICLE: **Level 4** = GOLEM KILLER: **Level 5** = SCARAB: **Level 6** = WEB OF DEATH: **Level 7** = MONSTER PARTY: **Level 8** = CAVE OF DOOM: **Level 9** = UNDERGROUND: **Level 10** = DEATH CHAMBER: **Level 11** = GOLEMS CAVE: **Level 12** = HORNSLUT: **Level 13** = SLIME HOLE: **Level 14** = BLOOD SMELL: **Level 15** = BONE POWDER: **Level 16** = NIGHTMARE: **Level 17** = MONSTER BREED: **Level 18** = THUNDER STORM: **Level 19** = CREEPY CAVE: **Level 20** = LIQUIDISATION

BONOS BATHING CO
BONOS BATHING CO

Now we'd be making it far too easy for you to win yourself a radio if we printed the remainder of the passwords, wouldn't we?

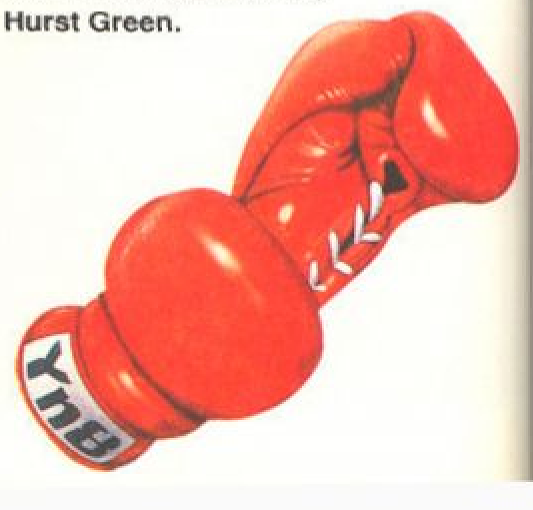
CHARLEY ALLAN, Ipswich.

BANGKOK KNIGHTS

This infinite energy poke should help any C64'ers who are having the stuffing knocked out of them a little too often.

```
10 SYS 65371: POKE 646,1
20 FOR A=608 TO 624: READ B: POKE A,B:
NEXT
30 FOR A=53213 TO 53256: READ B: POKE
A,B: NEXT
40 SYS 608
50 DATA 32,44,247,32,108,245,169,128
60 DATA 141,237,2,76,166,2,76,221,207
70 DATA 169,32,141,249,3,169,246,141,250
80 DATA 3,164,207,141,251,3,169,16,141
90 DATA 252,3,169,127,76,81,3,169,234,141
100 DATA 75,169,0,141,250,75,169,234,141
110 DATA 170,17,141,171,17,90
```

MATTHEW MORIARTY, Hurst Green.

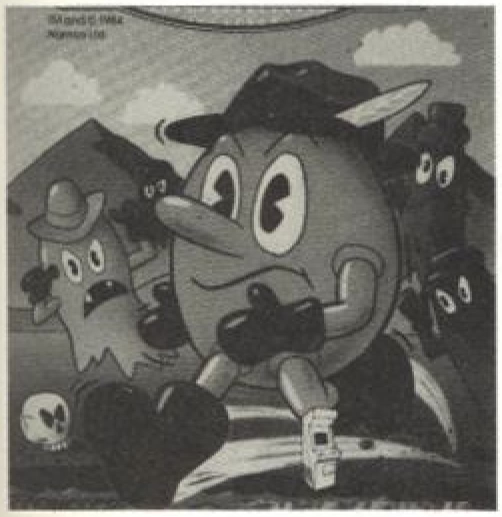


MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

If it's infinite lives you want, this Spectrum poke will do the trick.

```
10 PRINT AT 10,0; "START TAPE"
20 LOAD "" CODE
30 FOR F=61457 TO 61466
40 READ A: POKE F,A
50 NEXT F
60 RANDOMIZE USR 61440
70 DATA 175,50,189,164,50
80 DATA 206,200,195,0,161
```

TONY PASTOR, Bracknell.



PACLAND

This C64 poke will give you unlimited lives, which could prove to be very helpful.

```
1000 DATA 169,207,141,41,3,32,86,245
1010 DATA 169,32,141,187,3,169,240,141
1020 DATA 188,3,169,2,141,189,3,160
1030 DATA 15,185,222.207,153,240,2,136
1040 DATA 16,247,96,238,32,208,238,33
1050 DATA 208,169,189,141,162,9,252,0
1060 DATA 0,96,169,49,141,159,2,169
1070 DATA 234,141,160,2,76,237,246,0,0
1080 FOR L= 53179 TO 53242: READ A
1090 POKE L,A:NEXT:POKE 157,128
1100 SYS 53179
```

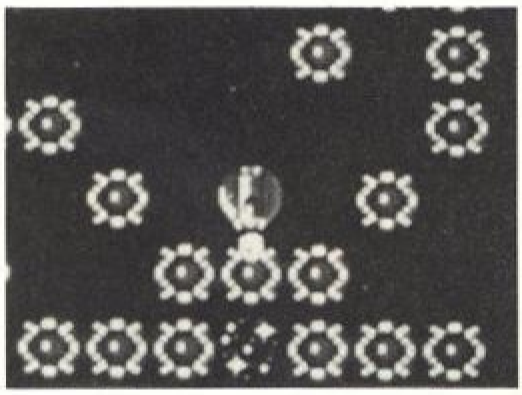
THE HACKER, London.

SABOTEUR II

PC owners needing some help will find these codes handy.

Level 1 = ENTER: **Level 2** = JONIN: **Level 3** = KIME: **Level 4** = KUJI KIRI: **Level 5** = SAIMEN-JITSU: **Level 6** = GENIN: **Level 7** = MI LU KATA: **Level 8** = DIM MAK: **Level 9** = SATORI.

PAUL MINTON, Pinner.



HUNTER'S MOON

If you want infinite lives, this C64 poke will help, but you'll have to do without the game's music.

```
20 READ B:POKE A,B: C=C+B: NEXT
30 IF C=5824 THEN SYS 544
40 PRINT "":END
50 DATA 32,44,247,169,21,141,177,3
60 DATA 169,55,141,178,3,169,106,141
70 DATA 179,3,32,108,245,169,67,141
80 DATA 39,192,169,2,141,44,192,32
90 DATA 191,3,96,169,244,141,154,35
100 DATA 169,0,141,242,193,76,226,193
```

PAUL SILCOX, Bristol.

STAR WARS

Enter and RUN this C64 poke for infinite shields.

```
1 FOR X= 320 TO 392: READY: C=C+Y: POKE X,Y: NEXT
2 IF C= 8560 THEN POKE 157,128: SYS 320
3 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
4 DATA 32,86,245,169,76,141,239,2,169,86,141,240,2,169,1
5 DATA 141,241,2,96,72,77,80,169,76,141,220,16,169,102,141
6 DATA 221,16,238,222,16,76,16,16,32,64,1,169,113,141
7 DATA 240,2,76,167,2,169,173,141,127,78,141,3,79,141
8 DATA 129,136,141,84,137,141,210,144,141,140,145,141,173,181,96
```

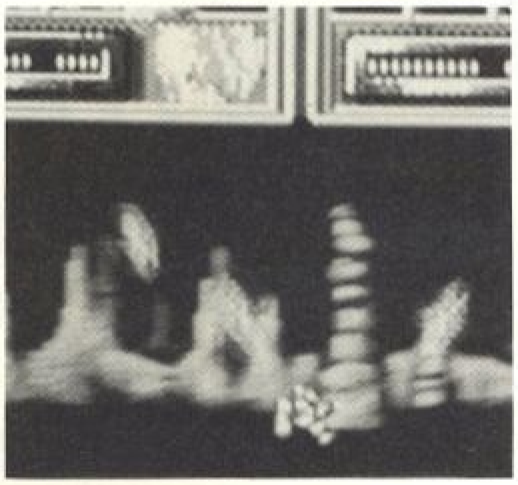
THE MASTER HACKER, Holywell

JET BOYS

This C64 poke will grace you with infinite lives and no end of level guardians.

```
1 FOR X=320 TO 367: READY: C=C+Y: POKE X,Y: NEXT
2 IF C=5260 THEN POKE 157,128: SYS 320
3 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
4 DATA 32,86,245,169,81,141,245,3,169,1,141,246,3,96,72,77
5 DATA 80,169,94,141,86,5,169,1,141,87,5,76,0,4,169,96
6 DATA 141,2,118,169,173,141,52,94,169,240,141,238,94,76,190,92
```

THE MASTER HACKER, Holywell.



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This month's 'tip of the month' prize goes to Richard Yarnall for his magnificent *Dungeon Master* maps. Richard earns himself copies of *Carrier Command, Spidertronic, International Soccer, Return to Genesis, Deflektor* and *BMX Simulator*. Pretty impressive, eh? Robert Newton earns himself a copy of *Carrier Command* for his ST, and Maryn Arif, 'The Hacker' and 'The Master Hacker' all run away with copies of *ATF* for their C64s. And last but not least, Charley Allan wins *Ferrari Formula One* for his Amiga.

YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT'S ON *NEXT MONTH'S* CASSETTE...!

Yes folks, the great ACE software bonanza is continuing. Next month's issue includes *another* sizzling cover cassette. The game on it is so remarkable we daren't breathe a word about it... Not yet. Just check out your newsagent on **Friday June 3rd** and prepare to be astounded.

ALSO NEXT MONTH...

- An incredible offer for ST and Amiga owners.
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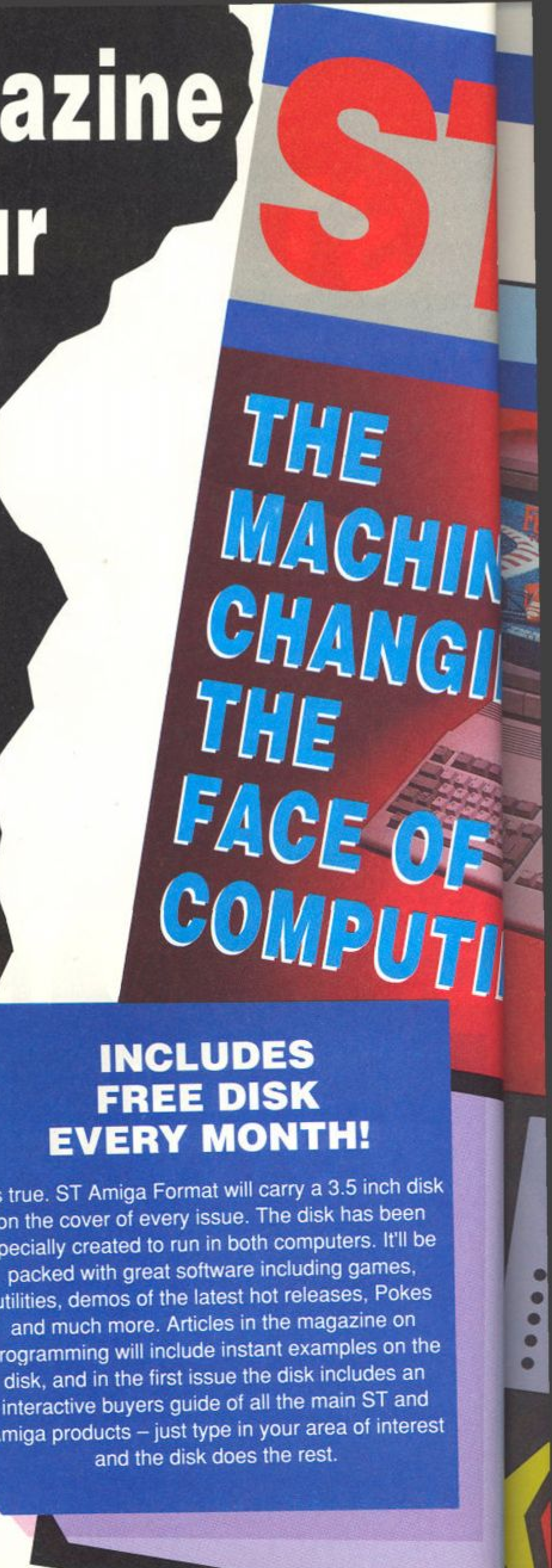

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It's true. ST Amiga Format will carry a 3.5 inch disk on the cover of every issue. The disk has been specially created to run in both computers. It'll be packed with great software including games, utilities, demos of the latest hot releases, Pokes and much more. Articles in the magazine on programming will include instant examples on the disk, and in the first issue the disk includes an interactive buyers guide of all the main ST and Amiga products – just type in your area of interest and the disk does the rest.

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF

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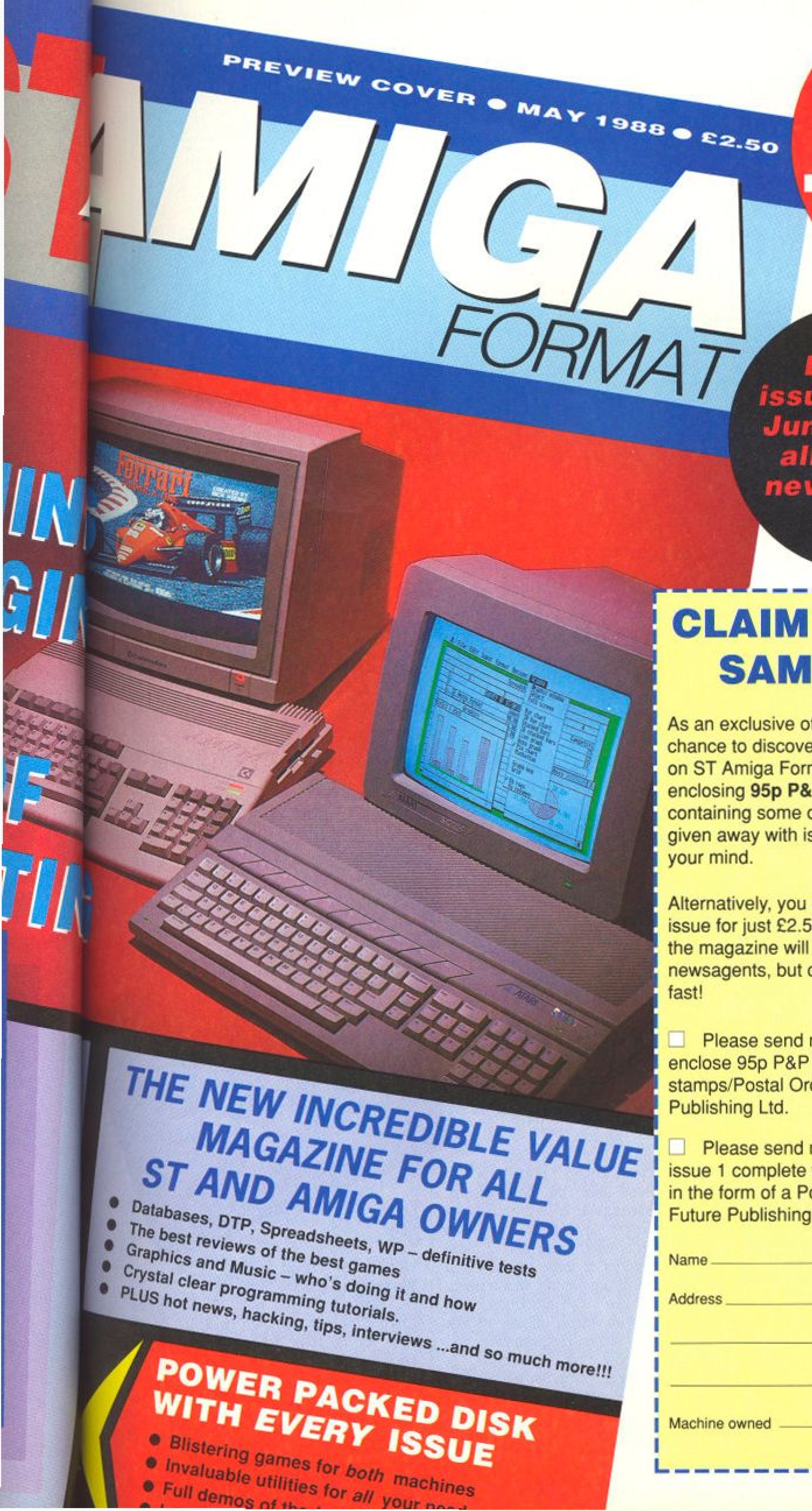

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DOING IT YOURSELF

Tony Bridge charts the growth of the adventure creators, leading up to Incentive's *ST Adventure Creator – STAC*.

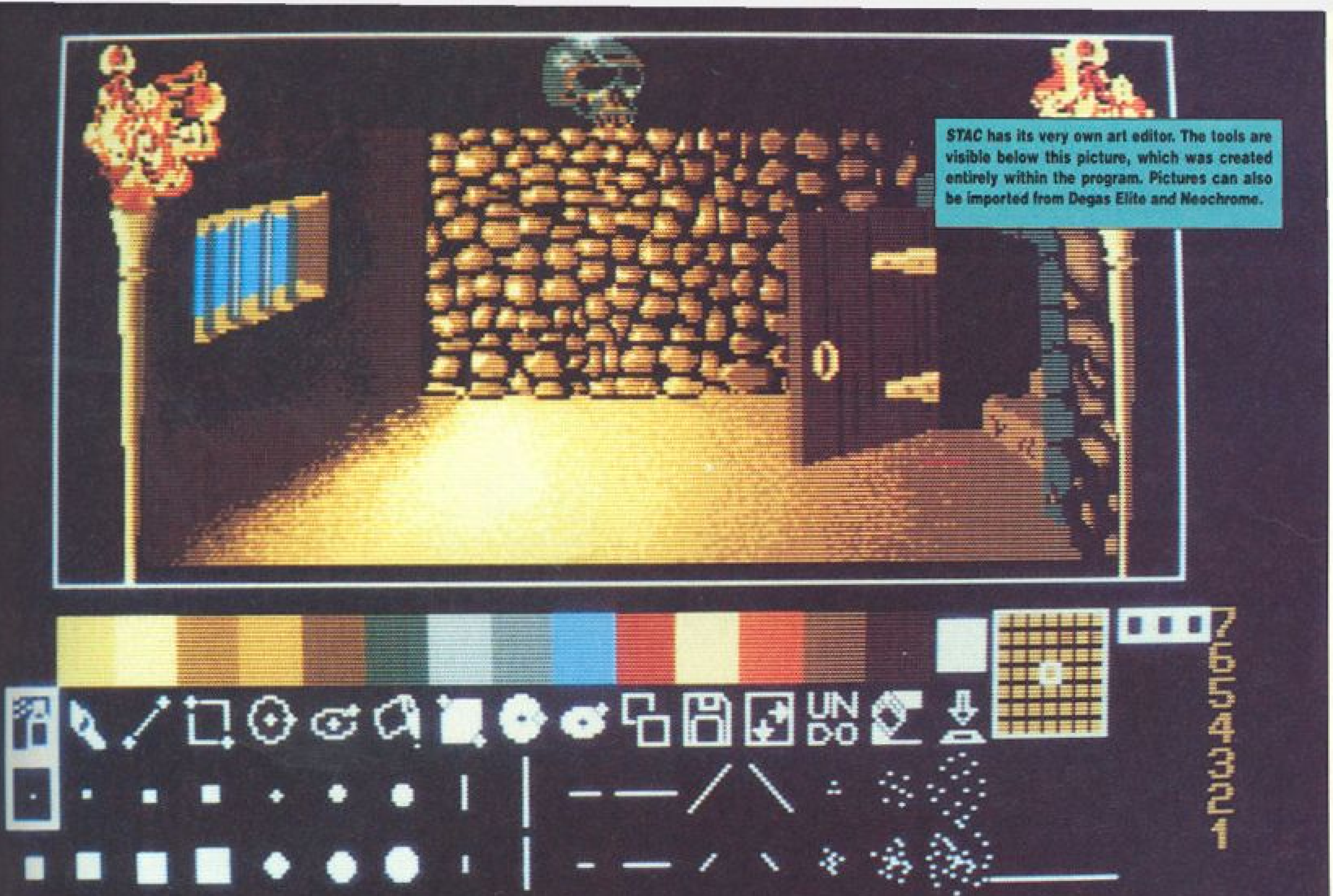
STAC
The ST Adventure Creator

Much of the early 8-bit adventure software came to the UK from the States and was, of course, text-only. Once Sinclair appeared on the scene with the ZX-80, adventures slowly started being written on this side of the Atlantic (though Level 9 started on their climb to stardom at this time on the Newbrain – remember that?). The writers of these early probrams were, on the whole, working out of their bedrooms, some being comptetent at machine code level, while others perfected their Basic techniques, for which adventures were ideally suited (although running a little slowly in some cases!). Text adventures remained the standard, while graphic adventures made an early appearance here in the guise of *The Hobbit* (which is still standing at Number One in the Reader's Adventuring Charts of a major magazine – actually, that tells me more about the readers than the magazine).

It was the appearance of Gilsoft's *The Quill*, and later *The Graphic Adventure Creator* from Incentive Software that persuaded even non-programmers that they could tackle adventure-writing, and now, some four years later, the home-grown, mail-order adventure is a well-established part of the market. Several hit adventures too have been created using one of these utilities. The impact of these utilities on a market starved of adventures was tremendous. Rather like the introduction of printing, adventure-writing utilities set free the imagination of non-programmers, hindered until now by ignorance of machine-code and computer-speak. The adventure market may not be large when compared with the arcade game sector, but many people acquire a computer for adventures who may otherwise not be tempted. A good case of 'the software sells the machine...'

Can Incentive's new *ST Adventure Creator* (hereafter known as *STAC*) do the same for the 16-bit adventuring scene and become a standard utility for fantasy writers?

In many ways, the current 16-bit scene reflects the state of early 8-bit software. The major portion of leisure software consists of



STAC has its very own art editor. The tools are visible below this picture, which was created entirely within the program. Pictures can also be imported from Degas Elite and Neochrome.

graphically stunning shoot-em-ups of one sort or another, and most of these come in roundabout fashion from the States. There, the adventuring market demands graphic decoration, and progress in the game is largely a matter of selecting the correct command from a short list. The major exception, as always, is Infocom, though even this company, previously dedicated to text-only, is having to introduce gimmicks to catch the attention.

Unfortunately, in order for a game to become a mega-hit, the distributors must be wooed with a demonstration of the game. With so many games clamouring to be seen, each one gets just a few minutes, so obviously any gimmick that can grab the attention in that short time will help the game stand out. This is important when the game is submitted to a prospective software house, but even more so when it eventually comes up before the distributors, who must give their approval before the adventure can be marketed. Faced with many hundreds of new releases from all quarters, the selection process is usually conducted by viewing a five-minute snippet of each game on a specially-compiled video. Hardly a friendly environment for the usual 'What now? Go North'!

Fergus McNeil is head of Delta 4 Software in Southampton. Seizing on *The Quill* at the very start, he produced one or two so-so games before finding his forte in brilliant parodies of adventuring conventions (and producing, along the way, the first adventure version of an arcade game!). Now one of the

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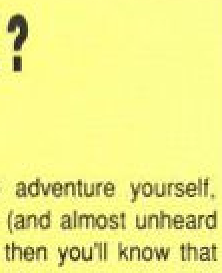
STAC SUCCESS?

Will the major software labels welcome *STAC*? Several major hits have been written with one of the adventure-writing utilities. But on the whole, major companies are not exactly screaming out for them.

The Development Manager of an international label with several current Chart successes says: 'No commercial software house is going to have the slightest interest in an adventure written using a utility. Not that we have anything against the utility itself, but that the games tend to look the same, and don't have that certain 'hit' quality that we're looking for. But of course, if someone were clever enough to heavily disguise the origins and produce something like *The Pawn* (and didn't tell us how it had been written), then we'd certainly be interested.'

Clement Chambers of CRL had a different outlook: 'We'll look at anything by anybody, and we don't care how it was written, as long as the author can write a good script – any program we decide to take on board will anyway be spruced up in-house.'



SHOULD I GO IT ALONE?

That is the question, whether it is more profitable to send along your newly-created adventure to a major software house or knock out the Letraseted cassettes from your bedroom.

The equation isn't simple, and there are several factors that you should take into consideration – more indeed, than we have space for here. As we've seen, the adventure market is but a small part of the whole, so many companies are not very interested in adventures, especially of the text variety. If the company is particularly large, the marketing department will have a number of programs to look after and promote, so your little baby will be just one of several others. On the other hand, advertising will be extensive and in full colour, thus ensuring a high profile.

If you release the adventure yourself, which is very often done (and almost unheard of in the arcade sector), then you'll know that you will devote the whole of your attention to it. But then, it's unlikely that you'll be able to afford the heavy advertising costs – this hasn't stopped a healthy marketplace developing in Fanzines such as *Probe*, though. If you do decide to go solo, then make absolutely sure that your packaging is the best that you can afford, that the grammar and spelling in the game itself is flawless, make it as easy as possible for the reviewer to have a good time and finally, ensure that your adventure is thoroughly play-tested by yourself and others.

PROGRAMMING WITH *STAC*

Pat Winstanley sees just how flexible Incentive's ST Adventure Creator is in practice.

Programming languages seem to fall into two categories – easy to use and inflexible or incomprehensible and limitless. *STAC*, on the other hand, has managed to combine the best of both worlds. For the beginner there are simple keywords which handle most routine adventure actions with little effort, while the more advanced writer will discover an almost unlimited flexibility to customise the simple actions.

On the disk is a quickstart file which contains the messages and routines needed to run any adventure, such as Inventory, Look etc. These can be ignored by the beginner and used exactly as they stand, while the more advanced user is free to customise each routine as required.

Actually entering code is a dream, as you can virtually forget about numbers and use English instead. Thus to enter a condition intended to get a specific object, you would type something like;

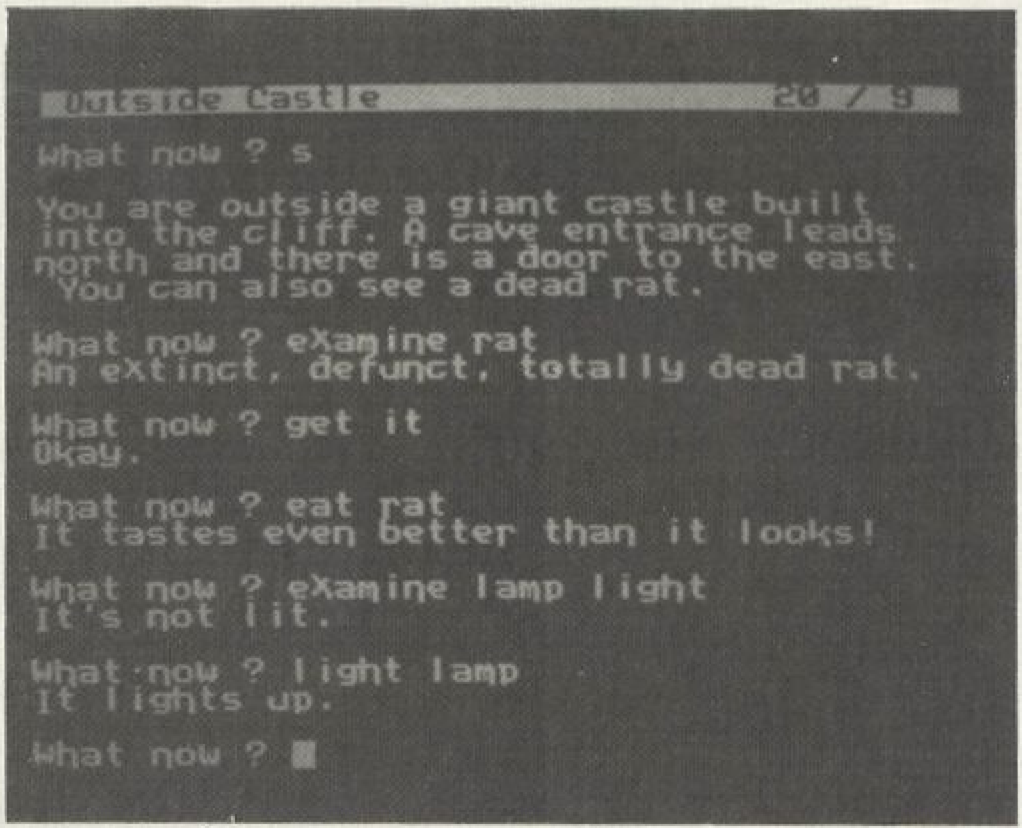
```
if verb 'get' and noun 'plate' then get
'plate' set 'plate' ok
```

STAC looks up any words in inverted commas in the vocabulary lists and automatically changes the word to a number for its own use. Assuming object number 10 and noun number 10 to be plate, then after the condition is entered *STAC* would display it like this;

```
if verb 'get' and noun 'plate' then get
10 set 10 ok
```

Debugging is made much simpler using this system too, as instead of a mass of conditions full of numbers, the 'if' part of a condition is generally in words.

Another very useful feature is *STAC*'s display of lists of conditions, objects etc. With *GAC*, the programmer has to type in the number of the entry required, which can be time-consuming if poor records have been kept. But with *STAC* you can simply scroll up and down the lists using the cursor keys until you find the entry you want (as with vocabulary lists in *GAC*). The special conditions can't be listed in this way directly, but can be printed to the screen from the print menu, which is vital if you have forgotten just which condition uses what. This display system makes the use of a printer unnecessary (although still very useful at times).



```
 Outside Castle                            20 / 9
What now ? s

You are outside a giant castle built
into the cliff. A cave entrance leads
north and there is a door to the east.
 You can also see a dead rat.

What now ? eXamine rat
An eXtinct, defunct, totally dead rat.

What now ? get it
Okay.

What now ? eat rat
It tastes even better than it looks!

What now ? eXamine lamp light
It's not lit.

What now ? light lamp
It lights up.

What now ? █
```

The existence of 'repeat.... until' and subroutines are probably the best thing about *STAC*, as both can be nested and called from each other at any time. Using the Low conditions principally as a directory of special routine calls allows the same subroutine to be used over and over again in many different ways. I found that allocating a different subroutine for each verb makes the code easy to follow.

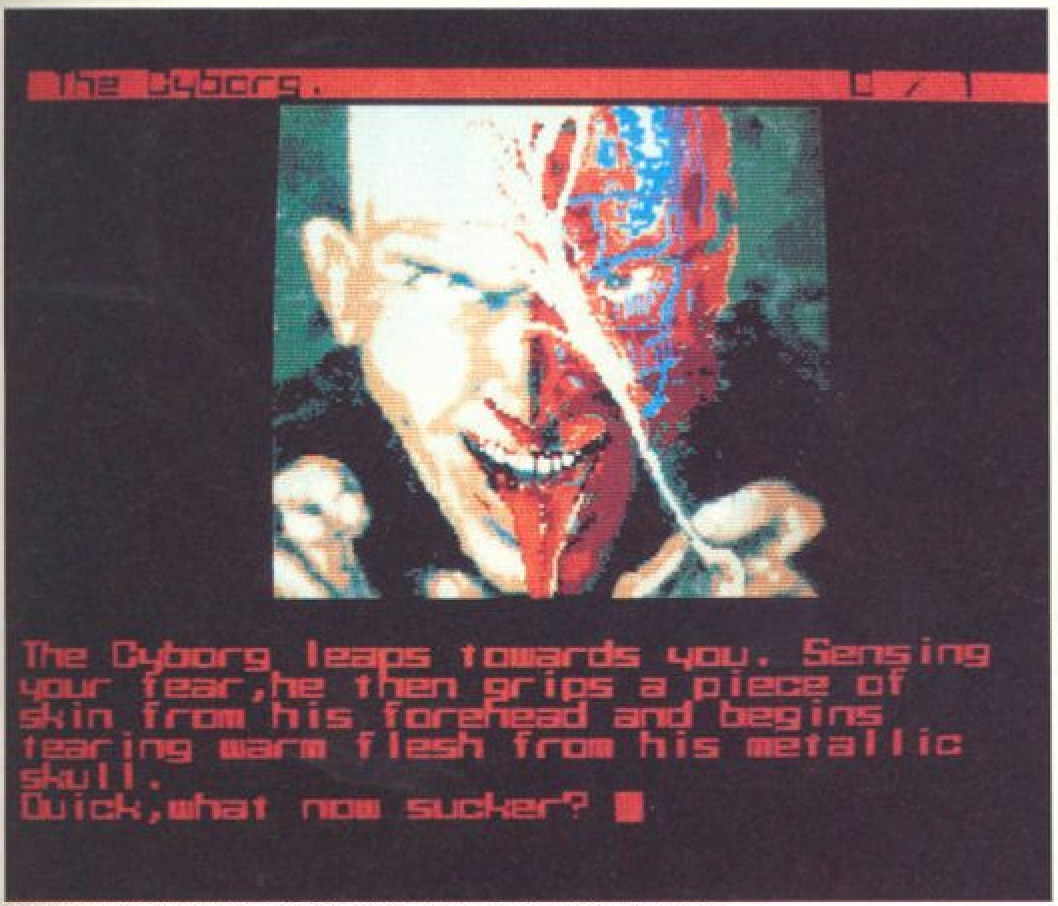
In addition, it is possible to look at the player's command and change the words in it. Often, the player's choice of words in a command will not exactly match your condition. 'Clean shoes with cloth', 'Brush shoes', 'Use cloth on shoes' etc. all imply the same action. As the programmer, you would simply choose one option and write a condition for it.

Any other combination of words meaning the same could be caught before that condition is reached and the player's command changed using the WORD command to match the relevant condition.

Strings can be used to take commands from the player (useful when wishing to converse with characters), manipulated in a variety of ways by adding or deleting letters and numbers and used even for writing to the graphics screen. You can even ask the player's name at the beginning of the game and incorporate it into the 'What now?' prompt.

On the *STAC* disk are a number of fonts which can be redesigned by the programmer both for shape and text colour. As each font can hold two sets of letters and numbers, each set in a different colour and shape, some very pleasing effects are possible. In addition, both the graphics and text screens can easily be recoloured during play. *STAC* can also cope with either 40 or 80-column text, regardless of whether graphics are present or not, and a command is included whereby both the programmer and the player can choose the text resolution.

Those are just a few of the possibilities that I've found so far – there are many more for the enterprising programmer to develop. And you don't need to be an expert. The rank novice can write a reasonable game without changing any pre-set conditions using only the simpler keywords. Using *STAC* is rather like writing in Basic – you only use the keywords you need. But, unlike Basic, every available keyword has been designed with adventures in mind.



The Cyborg.

The Cyborg leaps towards you. Sensing your fear,he then grips a piece of skin from his forehead and begins tearing warm flesh from his metallic skull.
Quick,what now sucker?

This unpleasant Cyborg was imported into *STAC* from Neochrome and then touched up.

most successful figures in adventuring software, he says: 'The super-adventures from people like Magnetic Scrolls and Level 9 are great adventures, of course, but what the important people, the distributors, notice first and foremost are the beautiful pictures and the smart presentation. Without these, even the best program is likely to be passed over.'

One of the most persuasive arguments levelled against adventures produced on *PAW*, *GAC* and the others is their uniform look. Much of the time, this viewpoint is quite justified (see comments in the box) – as a reviewer, I have lost track of all the Terrible Trolls, Polysyllabic Pixies, Incarcerated Princesses and Mystic Magic I've been subjected to, all resplendent in their slowly-drawn graphics and the obligatory spelling mistakes, awful grammar and outrageous hyperbole. Of course, this is not the fault of the utilities themselves, which are among the most innovative packages released on the 8-bit micros – rather, the blame can be laid at the door of the authors' starved imagination. No doubt, this same poverty of originality will afflict the first adventures released using *STAC*. This is a pity, for the result will initially be the same suspicion on the part of the larger software houses and distributors as a *GAC*'d or *PAW*'d game now has.

So will we see the same sort of reaction to *STAC*'d adventures on the Atari? The initial reaction of some observers to Incentive's new *STAC* has been one of mild disappointment – but I have high hopes. It's true that *STAC* may not support sophisticated screen-handling – being new to the ST, I am still dazzled by drop-down menus and so on, and would much prefer to be in the GEM environment rather than the rather bland world of *STAC* – but surely all this will be the subject of a future update? Harking back to the early history of 8-bit micros again, adventures written with the utilities can indeed look much the same, but we'll soon see the extra memory and graphic capabilities of the ST put to good use. Any programming language, which is what *STAC* is after all, must be learnt and lived with before its full potential can be used. *STAC* is very friendly and easy to use, but this doesn't mean that all adventures written with it must look the same.

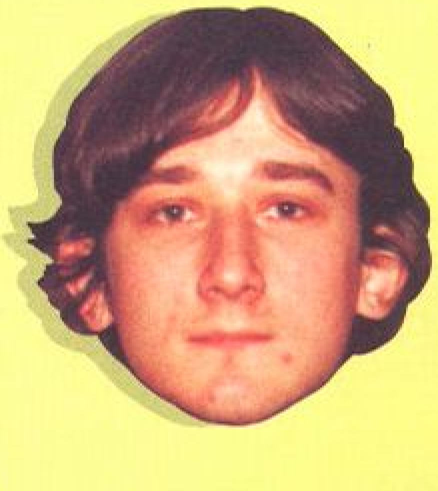
Finally, an illuminating comment from Tim Gilberts, the co-author of the legendary *Quill/PAW*: 'Adventure-writing systems tend to reflect the state of the industry as it was a couple of years ago.' This may be true, but *STAC*, linked to the ST hardware, has the potential to finally drag home-brewed adventures into the mainstream of entertainment software. ●

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

Could you earn a million pounds with your freshly-brewed adventure? Very few people have earnt a million pounds from software of any kind, let alone adventures – having said that, there must be very few authors who regret taking the plunge into those muddy waters. However, fortunes are not easily made, even if your game is taken up by one of the big software houses. On the whole, you may be better off viewing your efforts only as a hobby. Don't let this caution stop you from dreaming, though, because all the larger adventure houses will now accept ideas and story outlines from outside sources (but they will have to be outstanding to get even a glance!).

THE TALE OF SANDRA'S FREEZER

By Sean Ellis, author of *STAC*



Sean Ellis

❝ During the development of the *ST Adventure Creator*, many bugs were uncovered and unceremoniously stamped upon. However, one of our playtesters, Sandra Sharkey, consistently found bugs which no-one else could reproduce, let alone hunt down and kill. This perplexed me for quite a time, poring over listings, staring square-eyed into my monitor until the early hours of the morning, and tracing linked list structures by hand... not a pleasant task.

All this was to no avail. New reports came in from Sandra almost every day. I became more frantic, and began to curse the ST operating system. This is a common practice of most ST programmers at times of crisis.

After this failed, I used the long-honoured technique used by crossword puzzlists. I put it down for a while, intending to have a look at it later.

Finally, I received a phone call from Incentive saying that Sandra had tracked down all the bugs in one go, and that they resided in... the cooling mechanism of her freezer.

It seems that what happened was that Sandra's (rather old) freezer had been sending spikes down the mains whenever the cooling mechanism started up, causing havoc with the programs and data within the ST.

Needless to say, I was very relieved!

The moral of this story is: if a problem's snow joke and it threatens your cool, put it on ice (groan...). ❞

THE THIRD DIMENSION

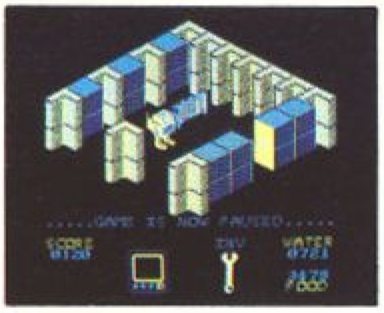
ISOMETRIC 3D GAMES

When Ultimate released *Knight Lore* for the Spectrum at the end of 1984, they brought a new word into the games player's vocabulary: ***isometric***.

Knight Lore wasn't actually the first arcade adventure to use an isometric perspective – that honour goes to Quicksilva's *3D Ant Attack* – while arcade games like *Zaxxon* and *Q'Bert* had also previously put the technique to good use, but the way in which the Ultimate blockbuster worked in consistent game physics and the use of objects made it truly revolutionary.

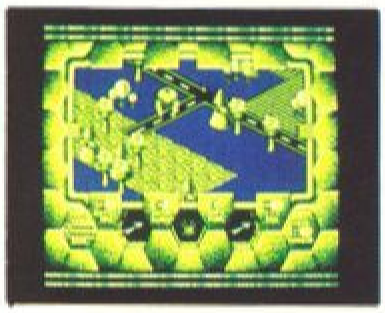
Isometric 3D has two enormous advantages for the programmer. First, it means an object is the same size wherever it is in the game landscape. This allows large, very detailed game objects which don't take up too much memory with graphics data and can move around smoothly. Second, it gives a good impression of solid realism so that the player can easily work out where objects are supposed to be. The former gave *Knight Lore* its enormous visual impact – it's hard for today's users to appreciate just what a sensation those graphics caused – while the latter made possible the kind of jumping puzzles and obstacle courses the game depended on.

While the *Knight Lore* tradition has been maintained first by Ultimate's own sequels (*Alien 8*, *Nightmare* and *Gunfright*) and later by Ocean duo Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond with the excellent *Batman* and *Head over Heels*, inventive programmers have been taking isometric 3D in other directions. The coin-op hit *Marble Madness* spawned a handful of control-orientated cliffhangers, at least one of them – Paul Shirley's *Spindizzy* – turning out rather better than the original. More recently, *Red LED* has brought new life to the game-style by introducing shoot-em-up elements, though Ariolasoft's departure from the UK has left the game's future looking uncertain.



Chimera

The strong graphic possibilities of isometric 3D haven't been lost on the graphically orientated French. ST and Amstrad hits like *Get Dexter* and *Spidertronic* from Ere and Loriciels' *MGT* have shown just how visually impressive the style can be. Closer to home we have Vortex's Costa Panayi, veteran of the *Highway* duo and *Revolution* – does he have any more isometric games up his sleeve perhaps? – and Dusko 'The Duke' Dimitrijevic of *Movie* and *Phantom Club* fame.



Amaurote

AIRBALL

Microdeal

Atari ST	**£24.95dk**

This has got to be one of the best isometric 3D arcade adventures available for 16-bit machines. It's obviously derivative of the Ultimate style (what isn't?) but has really surpassed it in terms of graphic detail and presentation. You are the airball in question, a sphere full of nothing but oxygen, and you must negotiate corridors and rooms full of wacky obstacles – all of them, of course, spelling instant death should you touch them. *Airball* is made even more attractive by the availability of the *Airball Construction Set*, allowing you to edit the existing game and make it easier or even more fiendish. Look out too for an Amiga version, due to appear in the next couple of months.

BATMAN

Ocean

Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**

The taller half of the dynamic duo as you've never seen him before, in the game which made Jon Ritman the master of the 3D arcade adventure. The action takes place in the Batcave, where Batman has to find the seven pieces of the Batmobile. Every one of the 150 locations is superbly designed, most containing tricky puzzles.

Batman has to find the equipment that will enable him to jump, float and carry objects. Then he's got to explore the maze of hazard-packed locations for the deviously positioned parts of the Batmobile. Wicked puzzles, beautiful screens and lots and lots of features.

AMAUROTE

Mastertronic

Spectrum	**£2.99cs**
C64	**£2.99cs**
Amstrad	**£2.99cs**

As an officer in the Royal Army of Amaurote it's your job to rid the city of the recent insect invasion. Climb into your Arachnus and stomp around the 25 sectors of the city destroying the queen and any remaining insects in each one. The stunning graphics and smooth animation combine to make *Amaurote* a fantasic looking game that is both challenging and addictive, and all this for a budget price!

CHIMERA

Firebird.

Amstrad	**£1.99cs**

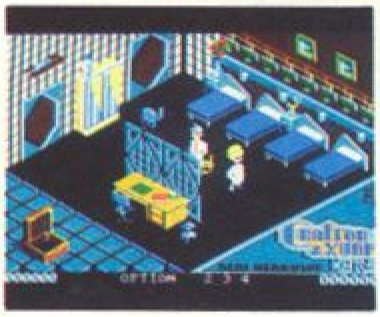
You're in charge of a chunky robot here as you trundle around a space ship trying to initiate a self-destruct sequence. The sequence consists of four stages and to complete each stage you'll need to find and use a number of objects. These objects can all be found around the ship, but the big puzzle is knowing which object does what and where. Trying to use the wrong object in the wrong situation will more than likely result in you having to re-start the game. A very Ultimate-ish, very addictive and very tough game that's well worth a look.

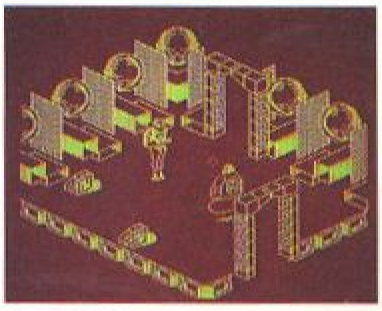
GET DEXTER I+II

Infogrames

Amstrad	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Atari ST (Get Dexter I only)		**£19.95dk**

Two games from across the channel that made a big splash over here. Their superb graphic quality was the first thing that got them noticed, but it didn't take long for people to get to grips with the weird and wonderful tasks in the games.





Phantom Club

In the original, Dexter and his sidekick the podocephalus have to cope with no end of surprises, from killer fans and hostile punks to potty professors and springboard beds. A game where the originality, humour and depth of the gameplay live up to the high quality of the graphics.

The sequel is every bit as nice to look at and presents just as many problems. There aren't quite as many cute touches, but Dexter and co have just as much to keep them occupied.

GLIDER RIDER

Quicksilver

C64	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
Spectrum	£8.95cs	
Amstrad	£8.95cs	

A game that is most memorable for its music and transformation sequence. You're on an island driving a motorbike that can miraculously transform into a hanglider – changing the delightful accompanying music at the same time.

Using this technological wonder you have to destroy the installations on the island. This calls for extreme accuracy and patience because the island is heavily defended.

Not the most colourful of games but worth getting just for the music and the sheer difficulty of the task facing you.

HEAD OVER HEELS

Ocean

Spectrum	£7.95cs	
C64	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
IBM PC		£19.95dk

Jon Ritman's follow-up to *Batman*, that once again takes the 3D arcade adventure to new heights of excellence. This time you're in control of two characters called Head and Heels. Individually they have useful powers, but together they form a much more effective being.

It's got twice the number of locations of *Batman*, the same delightful graphic design, more devious puzzles than you dreamed possible, humour, originality and challenge.

The alternative dynamic duo are in search of five crowns in Blacktooth Castle. Each one comes from a different area of the Empire which they can teleport to. Here they will need to act together sometimes to solve problems, but at other times they have to go separate ways to overcome a hazard.

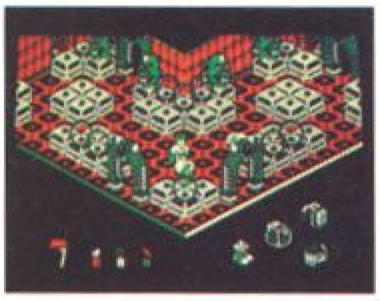
A classic game that nobody should be without.

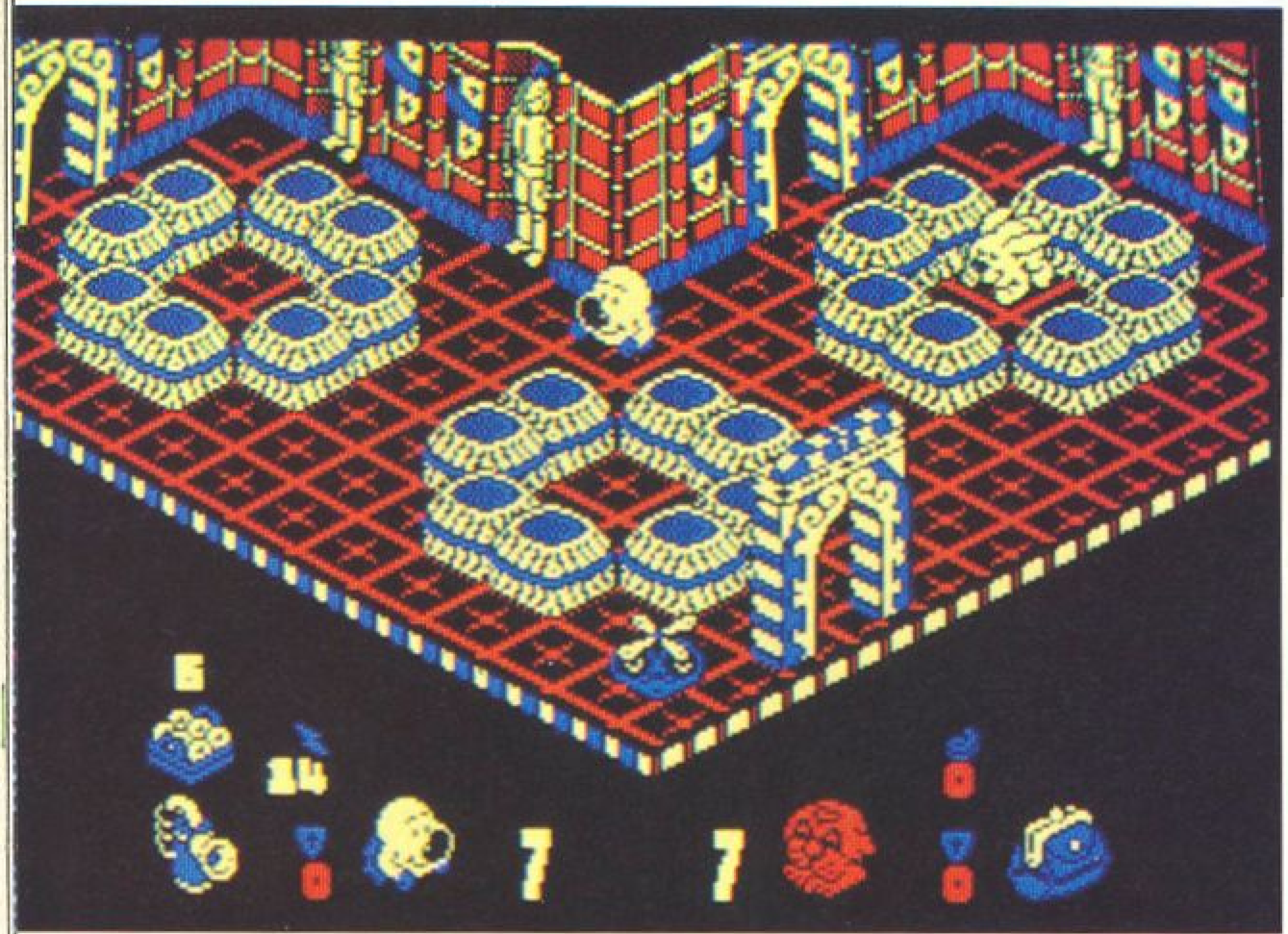
HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

Vortex

Spectrum **£8.95cs**
(On *Best Of 3D* compilation)

A terrific push-em-up here. You've got four dustbin-like robots with which you attempt to push a bomb along 30 zones of an alien-infested highway. Magnificent gameplay and a host of very tricky puzzles make this one definitely worth a look.



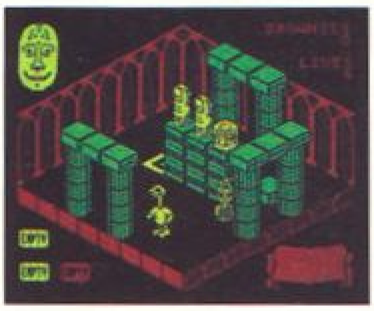


KNIGHT LORE

Ricochet

Amstrad **£1.99cs**

The game that started it all, this Ultimate oldie was a sensation in its day and rightly so. Now the antics of the little explorer-cum-wolf look rather old hat – mostly because they've been copied so many times since – but the jumping and dodging set-pieces will keep you feeding the central cauldron with potion ingredients into the wee small hours. The animation's a bit on the slow side perhaps, but the great transformation graphics are well worth seeing.

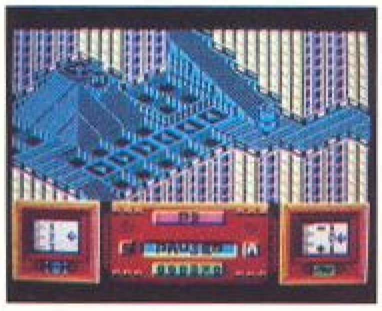


MAGNETRON

Firebird

Spectrum	£7.95cs	
C64	£8.95cs	£12.95dk

A follow-up to the old Hewson title *Quazatron*, this Steve Turner droid-em-up blends *Spindizzy*-ish terrain with *Paradroid* action as you cannibalise enemy robots and destabilise atomic reactors. Finely judged gameplay and effective graphics should help make a name for this addictive little number, but it's probably better known for the legal wrangle it caused between Hewson and Telecomsoft, and the six month delay this caused.



MARBLE MADNESS

Electronic Arts

Amiga	£19.95dk
Atari ST	£24.95dk
C64	£12.95dk
IBM PC	£19.95dk

The coin-op conversion that inspired a thousand clones. Basically, Brian, you're guiding a marble from the top of a sloping landscape through a network of troughs to the bottom – tricky stuff when you consider that falling out of a trough loses you precious time. Run out of time before you make it to the bottom and that's one life gone. Apart from the crippling time limit, you've got several species of alien to avoid. *Marble Madness* provides plenty of nail-biting tension and plenty of fun.

MGT

Loriciels

Amstrad	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**

(on *Straight Six* compilation)

The MGT is a MaGnetik Tank which has to free the Crystal Palace from alien bacteria that have destroyed the life support system and caused all the rooms to freeze. This introduces the main control problem of the game because the tank slides all over the place.

You have to solve puzzles in the Palace, most concerned with opening doors. Alien hazards also populate the rooms and contact with them can be fatal.

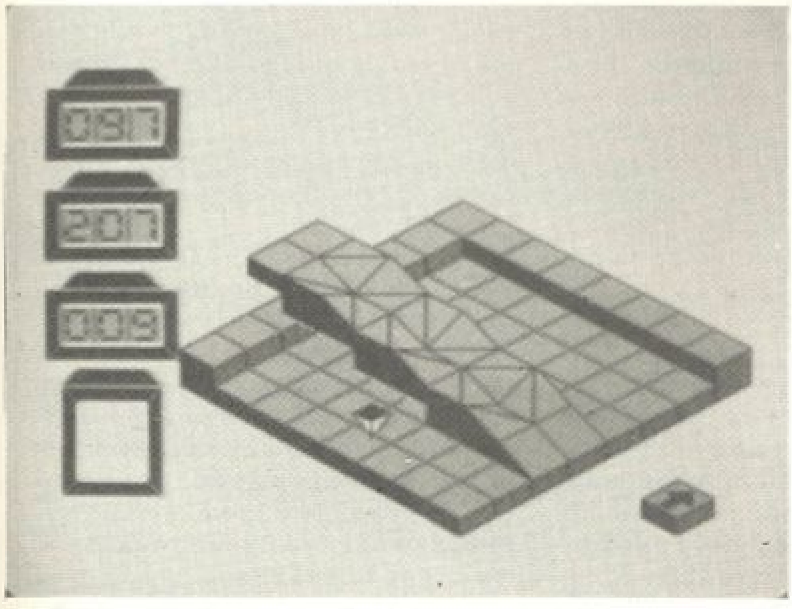
SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams

Amstrad	**£9.99.cs**	**£14.99dk**
Spectrum	**£9.99cs**	
C64	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**

Created a huge stir a couple of years ago when it was first released – on the CPCs, of all things – and is in many respects the definitive *Marble Madness* spin-off. You have to steer a spinning top over a variety of tough obstacles, collecting jewels on the way, while up against a nasty time limit.

The game is played on a vast landscape of ramps, walkways, towers, slides and trampolines, all surrounded by lethal drops into nothingness. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge the many gaps, but activating them in the right order is easier said than done. One of the most infuriatingly addictive games to appear in recent times.



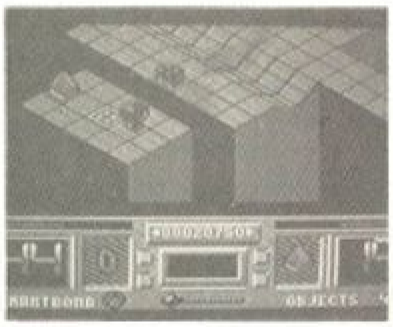
Spindizzy

PHANTOM CLUB

Ocean

Spectrum	**£7.95cs**	
Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**

Following *Movie* comes *Phantom Club* where you've got 550 locations to explore. Gone, though, is the icon-control system as you work your way up from a lowly Zelator to a prestigious Ipsisimus, which is the level you'll need to obtain if you hope to defeat the nefarious Zarg. There's some neat graphics, pleasing intro music and plenty for the hardened arcade adventurer to explore and blow away.



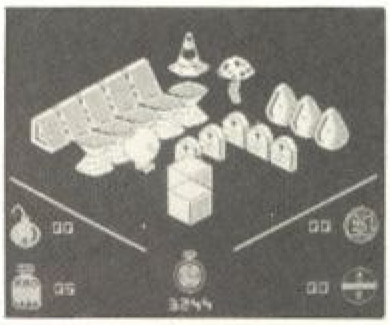
Red LED

MOLECULE MAN

Mastertronic

C64	**£1.99cs**
Spectrum	**£1.99cs**
Amstrad	**£1.99cs**

Probably the first £1.99 game with isometric 3D graphics, this simple exploration and collection effort has since been overshadowed by earlier full-price efforts subsequently re-released on budget. You'll find it now as a freebie on the flip-side of the more recent *Energy Warrior*, complete with a *Molecule Man* construction set for anyone who's really keen. Not the greatest gameplay or graphics you've ever seen, but as far as value for money goes it still takes some beating.



RED LED

Starlight

C64	**£9.99cs**	**£12.99dk**
Amstrad	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**
Spectrum	**£8.99cs**	

(Distribution now uncertain since Ariolasoft ceased to market games in Britain.)

This wonderful roll-around gives the player three droids to choose between in an attempt to clear a number of hexagons on a grid. Clear a line of hexagons and you've won – simple! Not quite, because each hex represents a landscape and you have to collect four energy pods from each landscape, whilst trying to survive the onslaught from all the resident aliens. The landscape for each hex varies and this is when droid selection becomes of paramount importance. Some hexes have steep, twisting slopes, so you'll need a droid that sticks to slopes like glue. Other hexes are covered with acid lakes, so you'll need to select a different droid to cope with them. Red LED is a challenging, frustrating, but hugely addictive game and one to look out for.

REVOLUTION

Vortex

Spectrum	**£8.95cs**

(On Best Of 3D compilation)

Costa Panayi added bounce and his usual inventiveness to *Marble Madness* control problems, and here's what he came up with. A terrific looker on the Amstrad and very playable on both formats, the game features some of the oddest and most challenging 3D puzzles ever seen. Hitting two blocks in quick succession might not sound too difficult, but with a range of obstacles in the way and sheer drops close at hand if you overshoot, things can get very tough indeed. The time limits are nasty too, and get tougher as you move on through the levels, giving the game lasting interest to match its instant appeal.

SWEEVO'S WORLD

Rebound

Spectrum	**£1.99cs**
Amstrad	**£1.99cs**

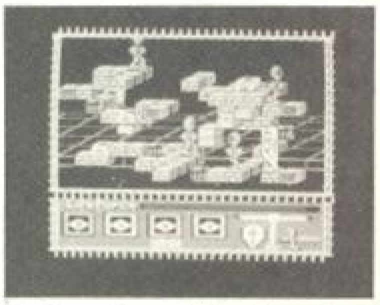
Billed as a cross between ET and Stan Laurel, the cutesy Sweevo was popular enough first time round to merit the sub-aqua sequel *Hydrofool*. The gametasks are broadly the same in both, involving the collection of useful objects and handy weapons to use in ridiculous tasks. The authors' bizarre sense of humour will have you saying boo to a goose, killing jellyfish with spoons and running up brownie points by – well, by collecting brownies. Graphically very strong stuff, but the lack of a jump facility can make both games rather flat to play. Also of interest is *Sweevo's Whirled*, a larger version of *Sweevo's World* running only on 128K Spectrums.

RASPUTIN

Silverbird

Amstrad	**£1.99cs**

The unusual perspective here – not really isometric at all – lends itself particularly well to the cunning puzzles and nasty little 3D jokes its author Paul Hibbard (now a senior figure at Rainbird) came up with. Jump from one platform to another if you can work out where everything actually is, chop up the marauding pugs if you can get below them to do it and then step out into the corridor to do battle with the evil Rasputin's guards. Intensely difficult and very bizarre, this inventive and striking game may well kill you with frustration – but at budget price it's an essential 3D buy.



PLAY IT... BY MAIL

This month Tony Ross takes a look at a couple of games – one set in the world of big business, one in the world of power politics and war.

SPECULATE

Waveney Games

This is a topical game with elements of 'insider trading' and 'asset stripping'. Eight players, each starting with £12,000, buy shares in any of 15 companies. Once £10,000 of shares has been bought in a company, it starts trading and the player with the most shares runs it, deciding what to buy, make, sell and how much to give away in dividends to shareholders.

Each company makes two or three different items which can be either finished goods such as houses, books, and yachts or components like energy, widgets and transport. All manufactured items are made from several different components and as companies can only build a few items themselves, the others have to be bought in or obtained from other companies.

It is possible to run several companies at once, and freely move items and money between companies. 'Asset stripping' is the process of removing all or most of the assets in a company; things like raw materials, stock and money are used to make one company strong at the expense of another. It's a pity that the companies can't produce beer, but maybe that would be taking realism too far.

Players only pick up money from dividend payments; it is possible to give all the money in a company away as dividends, but it goes to all of the shareholders, not just the owning player!

It is still early days in the game I'm playing but already one player claims to have cornered the market in Widgets. Without Widgets, half the items in the game can't be produced. That player is now trying to force everyone to pay 50% over the usual price.

This is cuthroat stuff, folks, and is a game written for devious players. My only complaint is that in some of the earlier turns, there are very few orders to write. It's too early to give winning strategies but getting control of at least one company is vital and with 15 companies for eight players, isn't too difficult.

There hasn't been much diploming* yet, but it is starting to increase, as a response to players trying to dominate the market.

Speculate costs £5.00 to join which gets a startup, rulebook and three turns. Later turns cost £1.25 each.

COMPLEXITY	**6**	**ENJOYMENT**	**8**
PRESENTATION	**7**	**SKILL**	**8**
VALUE	**8**		

CRISIS

MA Games

Imagine the board game *RISK* with factories, forts, and missiles and you'll have an idea of what *Crisis* is all about. 12 players fight it out, with victory going to the survivor. On each turn players decide what to produce, where to attack, fire missiles and which three countries to spy on.

Growth can be very rapid. In one game, I expanded from 30 factories at the start to 200 by turn 10. The key to doing well is striking a balance between producing factories and divisions. Three factories can produce a new factory or three divisions so 30 Factories could produce 10 new factories OR 30 divisions. If 10 factories are produced then next turn 40 divisions can be built. Missiles shouldn't be ignored, but left until a bit later when it is possible to build a lot in one turn.

Diploming with other players is important. Two players can mount a combined attack, with one launching missiles and the other invading with divisions. It's impossible to defend against this unless you are very powerful or have an ally yourself. Missiles that get through do damage against population and factories.

I've now played two games to completion. In the first I came second as Siberia to California after 25 turns. In the second I was Chile, and got knocked out by a California/Kenya alliance after eight turns. I don't know how that game ended, but as a parting shot I dropped a large number of missiles into California, not enough to knock him out but enough to weaken him and probably stop him winning the game!

Of all the PBM games I've played, *Crisis* is probably the simplest and is ideal for the novice .

Crisis costs £1.50 to start, which gets you a rulebook, map and the first turn. Subsequent turns cost £1.50, with an extra turn free if ten or more are bought.

COMPLEXITY	**3**	**ENJOYMENT**	**8**
PRESENTATION	**7**	**SKILL**	**6**
VALUE	**8**		

*** 'Diploming' – the term given to player-player communication, either within the game or outside it.**

PBM NEWS

TROLL'S BOTTOM

KJC Games has announced the launch of two new games. The first is *Troll's Bottom*, written and previously run by Project Basilisk. This is a fun game in which 70 Moon Trolls, accompanied by a pet vulture, move, hunt and fight on the island of Troll's Bottom. Victory goes to the last troll. Game starts are free and turns cost either £1.00 for a single turn, or £1.50 for a double turn. Not a game for the serious player!

DAWN OF ANCIENTS

In this game 12 players each control an ancient nation – Rome, Phoenicia or Egypt, etc. Battling against each other, and the computer-controlled Atlantis, each player builds colonies and war units, hires mercenaries and tries to become supreme. A game start costs £5.00 and each turn after costs £1.50.

COMPANY ADDRESSES

Crisis – MA Games, 15 Fairview Crescent, Harrow, Middx, HA2 9UB.

Speculate – Waveney Games, 28 Diprose Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY.

Troll's Bottom & *Dawn of Ancients* – KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs, FY5 2UL.

If you run a PBM company, players association or PBM 'zine, send us information about new games, updates and game meets. Review positions are sought in some of the newer games and these will get a preliminary review after a couple of months, followed up by an in-depth review after about six months.

Next Time, I hope to look at *In Dubious Battle* a game in which players take on the role of Gods. Happy PBMing!

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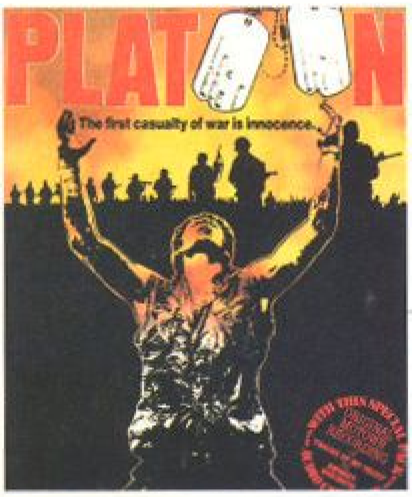
Amstrad disk	14.95	**11.95**	AC144AD


PLATOON
The first casualty of war is innocence.

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US Gold/Epyx

Follow up to a stunning classic featuring the evil Professor and his robots.

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ACE-raved combat flight simulator with stunning 3D graphics and high playability.

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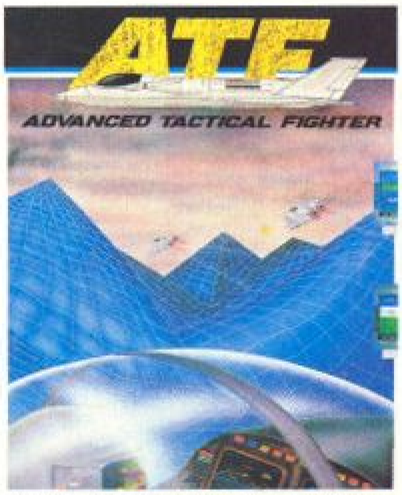
CBM 64 disk	12.95	**8.95**	AC154CD
Amstrad cass	8.95	**6.95**	AC154AC
Amstrad disk	13.95	**10.95**	AC154AD



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Ocean

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US Gold

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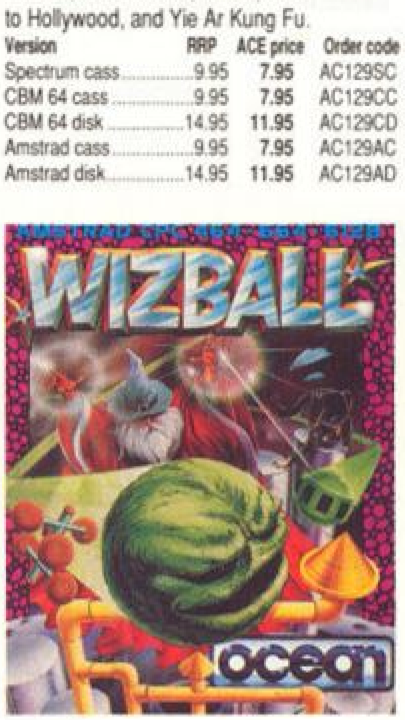

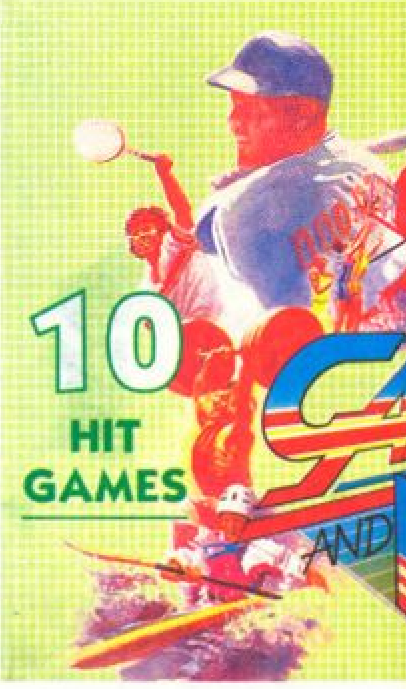

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(In addition to those elsewhere)

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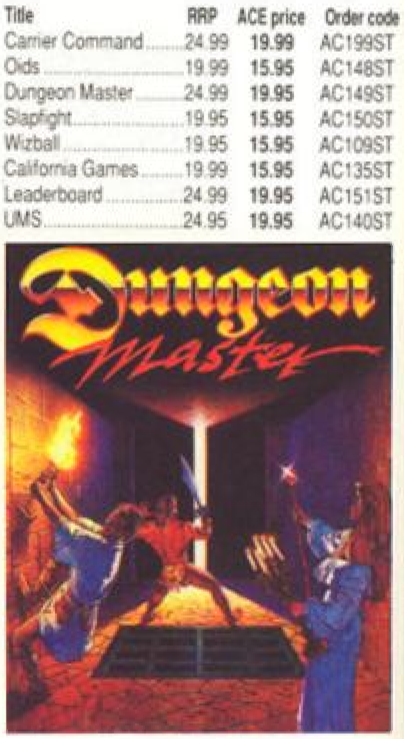

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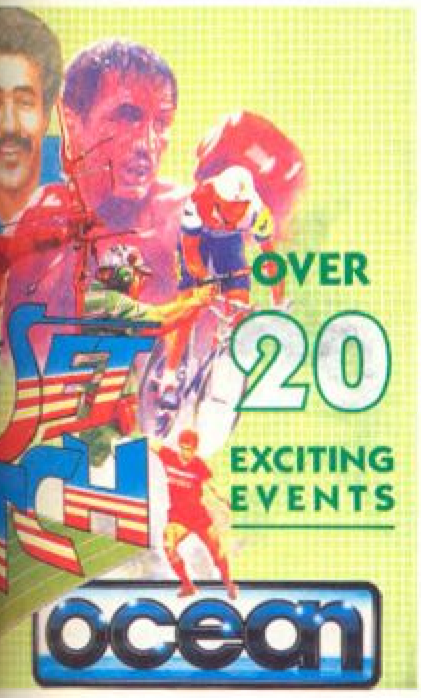

● AMIGA TITLES
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(In addition to those elsewhere)

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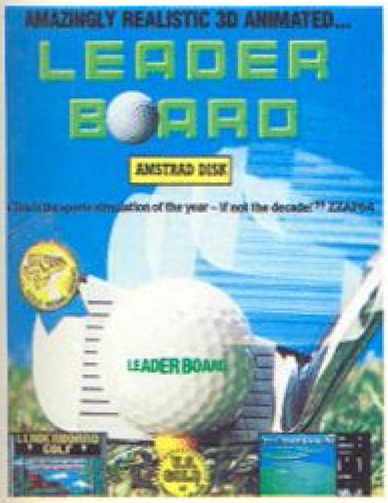
World Leaderb'd	24.99	**19.95**	AC151PC
Hardball	24.99	**19.95**	AC152PC
Jinxter	24.95	**19.95**	AC139PC
U.M.S.	19.95	**15.95**	AC140PC
Tetris	19.99	**15.95**	AC153PC



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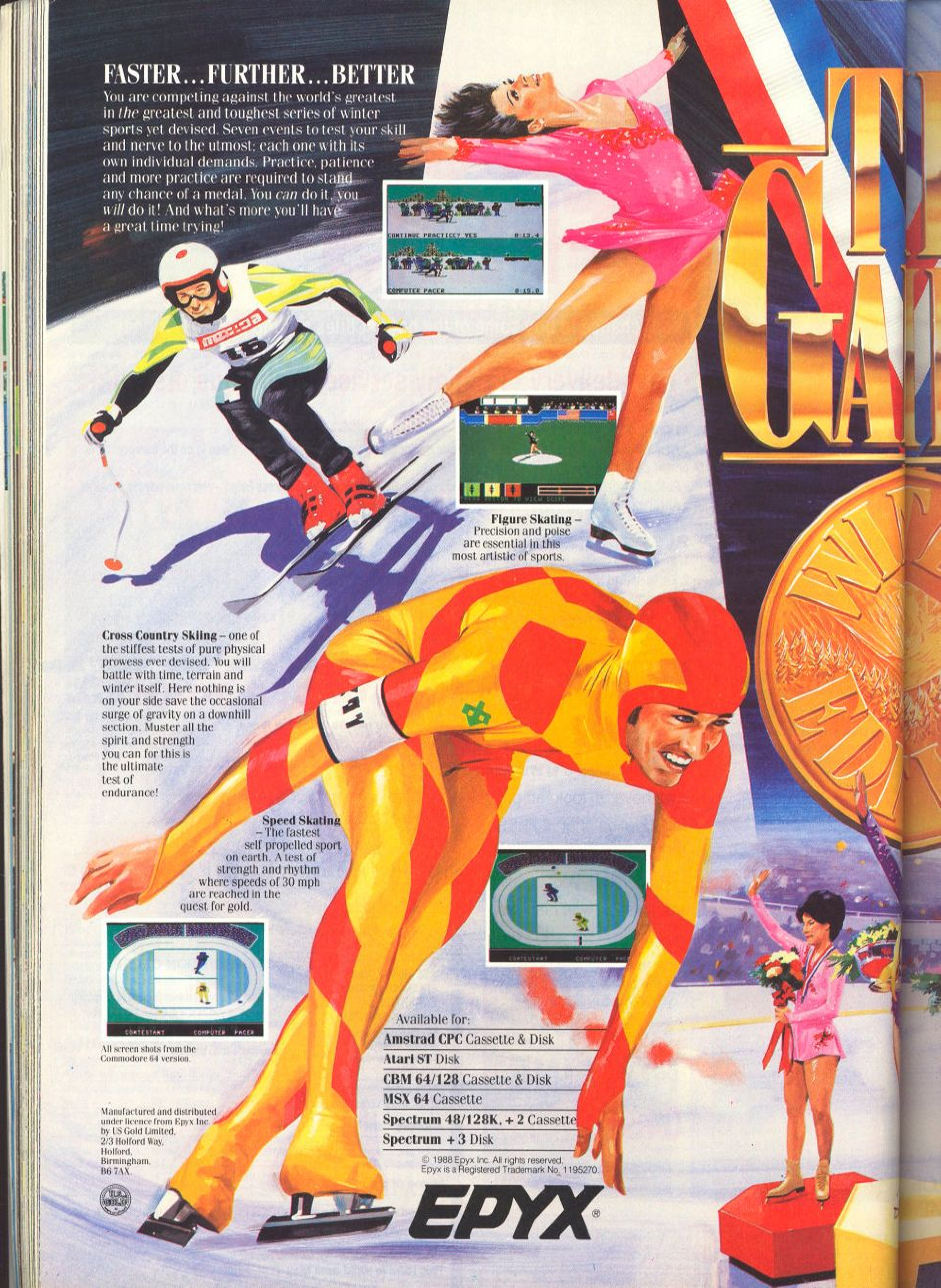
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All screen shots from the Commodore 64 version.

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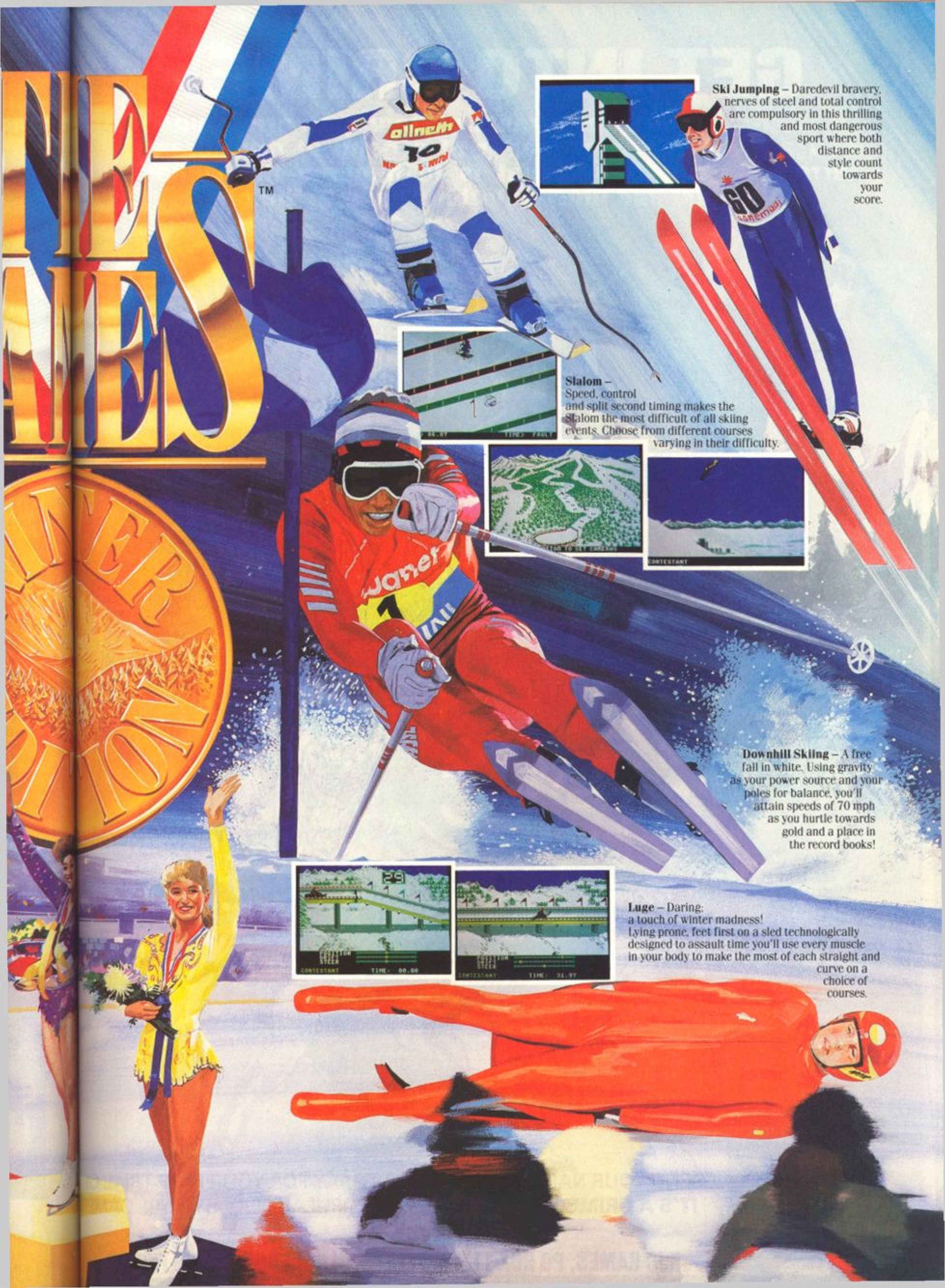

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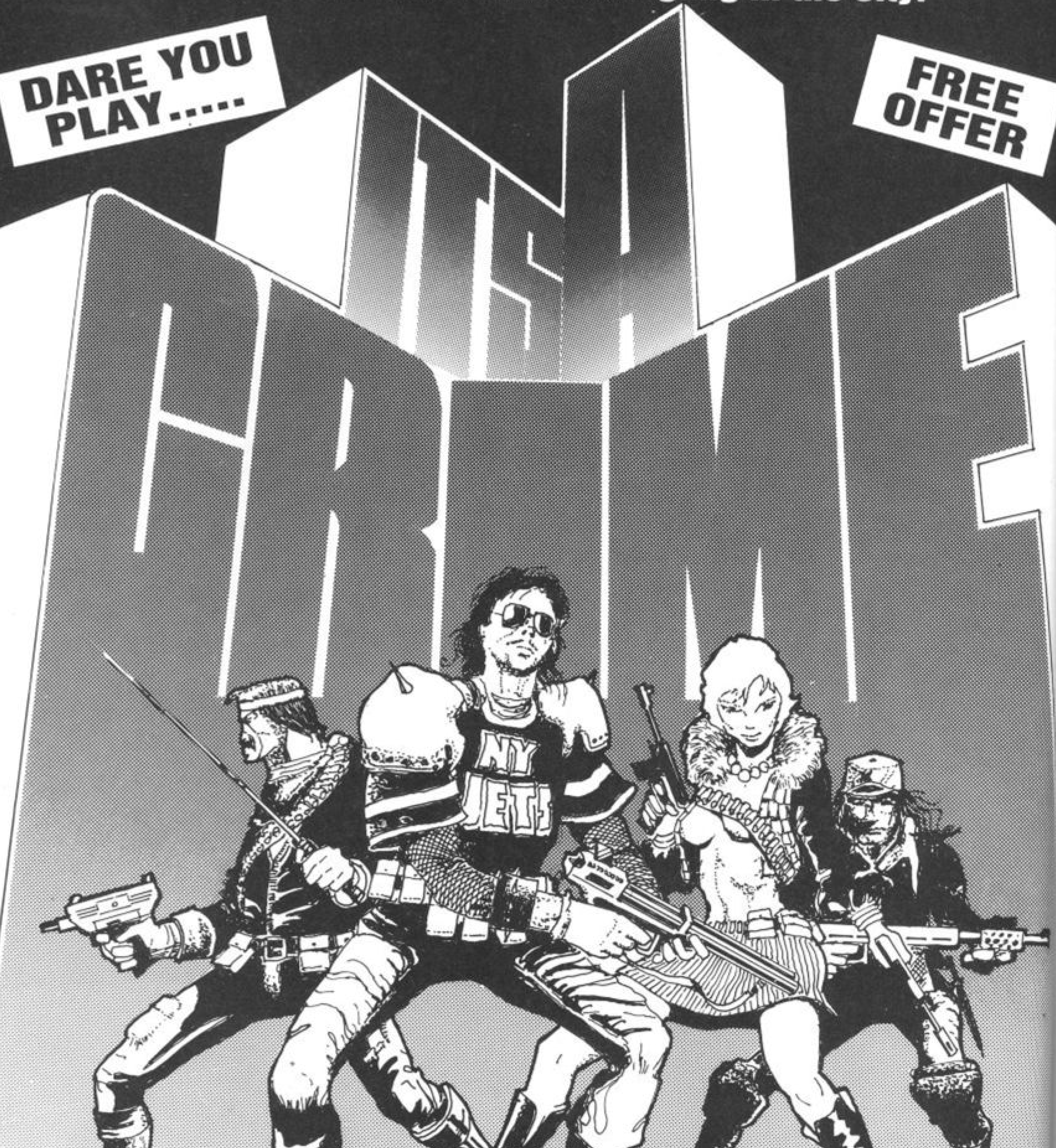

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ACE LETTERS

If there's one thing that gets you people agitated it's the subject of Piracy. After the recent letters on the subject we've been inundated with views, ranging from the ultra-piratical to the super-virtuous. Because of the number of letters we've had to print edited highlights - don't take offence if your letter has been chopped down.

And then there's that ST v. Amiga debate; will it never stop? But most curious letter of this month has got to be from the chap with a (literally) smelly ST.

If you want to raise a stink about something - and give yourself the chance of winning some software at the same time - write to ACE Letters, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ

CALL HIM STUPID...

Call me stupid but I don't know much about the ST range. I have heard a lot about the ST but some of it I am not sure about. I would be very grateful if you could answer these questions:

1. I have heard from a certain person that the ST can emulate a BBC Micro Computer. Is this true or has he been reading *C+VG*?
2. Also from this person I have heard that the ST can also emulate the Amiga! Can this really be true, the mildly humble ST can emulate the Rolls Royce of computers, the dream machine, the Amiga? If it is what hardware or software (or both) would I need and how much would it cost me?
3. I am thinking of buying an Atari ST-M and that certain person (again) has said that with the 'old' style 'M' you have to load up the GEM operating system,otherwise you're left with a blank screen. Is this true?
4. I have read in another multiformat magazine that people are having troubles with their STFMs. It has something to do with TOS version 1.09. What does TOS version 1.09 mean and why does it prohibit the use of some software? Would this affect my ST-M and if it did what could I do about it?
5. I have heard about a 'virus' in the Amiga P.D. disks and now it has spread to the ST. What exactly does the 'virus' do to your computer and is there any way of avoiding it? If I bought a computer and the public domain disks were 'infected' would I have the right to take the computer back and get a new one or get it repaired?

Matthew Larreta
Cardiff

If an ST can emulate a BBC or an Amiga it's the first we've heard about it. The TOS troubles you refer to have been discussed at length in recent ACE Letters; in practice it meant that some popular games would not run on some STs. The problem seems to be dying down, as software houses take more care to ensure across-the-board compatibility. There have been reports of ST viruses, but there's nothing to worry about yet.

KING KURT'S RAP

I would like to present your readers with a little poem I've made up (others call it a rap).

Advanced Computer Entertainment it's the best,
ACE magazine beats the rest,
The others they don't know how to review,
ACE could show them a thing or two.

ACE is the mag with reviews,
News, letters and previews,
It's got a section named Arcade Ace,
That will bring a smile to your face.
Other mags are in no position
To give ACE any competition,
Come on get your friends to listen,
And show them what they're really missing,

One pound fifty it's quite cheap
They sell it in the shop down the street,
So come on get a subscription,
You might win a competition.

I think this expresses my feeling about the mag, it's fabulous, keep up the good work, it beats the rest by miles.

Kurt Frary
Norwich

Funky stuff, Kurt. But we're not sure about that listen/missing rhyme...

PRIZE LETTER

TYPE-IN JOY

Congratulations - your idea for competitions is astounding. Who else could have thought to put a competition in their mag where you have to type in a listing to work out whether or not you have won. Not only did it give me pleasure, but it also gave me an hour and a half of peace and quiet while my 5 year old son Gary, and my 4 year old daughter Susan, typed in the listings for the competition and the Lissajou figures. The only fault where my children were concerned was the ""+-" and = symbols were a little small for them to follow. Thank you, from my children Susan and Gary Perks.

F.E. Perks
Barnsley

GAUNTLET GO-GETTER

Something strange happened to me on *Gauntlet*. When I got to level 12 I died so I wanted to get back to the start and start again, but I accidentally pressed 5 on the numbers just underneath the cursors on the Amstrad CPC. Then I looked up and saw the screen and pressed Fire on my joystick and saw that all my health was back. I kept on doing this whenever I died and got on to level 656. This tip also works on the 2 Player option. The only problem with it is that your score goes back to 0. Keep up the good work.

Ben Salisbury
Lewes

It's a great tip – but only for those players who prefer progress to points.

SAFE CONNECTIONS

I am writing to you with a few comments about Brian McCalmont's letter about computer crashes. A load of rubbish. Double adaptors don't make any difference because each socket still gets the same supply of electricity, and using a trailing socket can only make things worse as there is more cable to pick up interference. Putting the equipment in a different room does not make an awful lot of difference but it is important that the computer is away from noise sources such as fridges and record players. My worst cause of crashes has been faulty connections and turning on the monitor or printer while the computer is on, so turn on the computer last. When using cassette recorders or TV sets keep them as far away as possible from the computer.

Steve Lupton
Bradford

Tough talking, Steve. But you Tykes are famous for that, aren't you?

MORE MARIA

What's all this about Maria Whittaker?! People writing in to say she was wrong, others saying she was right. Nine times out of ten these are the people who are protesting about equal rights. Does this not mean she can do whatever she likes even if other people disagree. I think it's her body to do what she likes (this does not mean I agree with pornography). I mean she's earning more than most people and if she enjoys what she does, then let her do it, that's what I say. Also, I'd like to say that all this rating computer games is a load of crapology, because most of the time you can't see any gory details or provoking scenes. And even if you can see the violence very well some of us get a kick (and a laugh) out of watching it. It doesn't make me want to go out with a large broadsword and chop off someone's head. I'd like to finish off by saying that your mag is the best thing since sliced bread.

C.J.B.
Dublin

I for one am heartily sick of Maria Whittaker. Let's hear no more of her. If you want to write pro or con the half-naked-women-in-computer-games business, hold your fire till we get Vixen, Martech's latest exercise in the genre – this time is gorgeous, pouting etc. Page 3 Girl Corinne Russell.

AMIGA v. ST

...I bought my Amiga because I am loyal to Commodore and because it is a mega-machine and, as the saying goes, I prefer a Ferrari to a Cortina.
Darren Voisey, Malvern

...The ST is a more standard and user-friendly system than the Amiga. GEM is the main contributor this, and I think it is much better than the non-standard Amiga workbench.
P.J. Silcock, Basingstoke

...There is no winner in the 16-bit market. We can argue about specifications all day, but what it boils down to is who is offering the right deal at the right time. In my case the Atari price rise swung the balance in favour of the Amiga. Both systems are great – let's just enjoy them in our own way and not put other people down.
Ian Ackery, Bristol

....In my highly humble opinion the ST is by far the more appealing package. It is much cheaper, has a better software base and is excellent for MIDI musicians (although this would not appeal to many). The only reason I would buy an Amiga being £200 dearer would be the graphical ability of the machine. As I say, this is just my highly humble opinion.

D. Williams, Burbage

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE?

I am stuck as to the difference between an STM and an STFM (apart from £50). Will an STM run all the available software, and if it does, why the price difference? As I say, I don't need the machine to run anything but games and as I am unemployed that extra £50 makes all the difference.

Steve McClay
Merseyside

The STM was the predecessor of the STFM. It has no built-in disk drive and comes with an external power supply – so you end up with a bit of a spaghetti junction of cables and devices. There's no reason why it shouldn't run any of the software you want.

WHICH PRINTER?

I, an ignorant layman, am going to buy a printer, but I need some advice before I do so. I own a Spectrum +2, and used to have an Alphacom 32 printer, but it doesn't seem to communicate with the +2 too well.

I am looking for a dot-matrix printer, under £200 and which is compatible with my +2. I have thought about the DMP2000, but I'm not sure if it is compatible. I'd be most grateful if you could sugges some printers that come in to that category.

Alan McGregor
Killin, Perthshire

Assuming you have a parallel (sometimes called Centronics) interface you should have no problems with the DMP 2000 – or any other parallel printer. In fact, the DMP is a good buy; it's got the features you need, at a competitive price.

SPORT AID

I am currently trying to organise an event in aid of SPORT AID 88. I am writing to numerous personalities and companies, in the hope that they will be kind enough to donate a small token which could be raffled or auctioned to raise funds on July 2nd. I would be grateful if you could help in some small way.

Stewart Marsden
Acton, London

I think the best thing we can do is to print your letter; if anybody has any suggestions or offers we can put you in touch with Stewart.

CRYSTAL BALLS

8-bit is dead. 16-bit will die within two years, due to the PC Engine with its extremely high resolution in 32 colours. Then the computer tries to fight back with 32-bits but Commodore goes bankrupt because 20 million people own a PC Engine already. Next, Atari tries to stretch their 64-bit games console by saying 'fun with the new super console'. Disaster strikes! The console is too small and misses the eyes of potential customers. ACE immediately changes its name to Advanced Console Entertainment. Sega, after a rigid ride on the the control stick of their Mastermind console, decide to do the same to a £1 million arcade machine, so nobody knows how to play. Then the Computer Judgement Day finally arrives, the people who went with Alan Sugar in to the North Pole go to computer heaven.

The Truth
Thornton Heath

I'm not sure I follow your ramblings very clearly. Perhaps you know something the rest of us don't.

RGB PLEA

In your Pink Pages you say that the Amiga 500 has an RGB port. I have a Ferguson television with RGB and it has an 8-pin port. The manual for this is now over two years old and says RGB leads are available for computers such as the Oric, Electron and Dragon. Is there a lead that will plug in to the Amiga without a modulator? Secondly, can you back up software on the Amiga 500 without a disk copier?

Simon Lewis
Kingsley, Cheshire

RGB leads are finicky things; there doesn't seem to be any reason why you shouldn't be able to run your Amiga through your telly – but make you sure you get the right lead by going to a good electrical shop. You can't back up commercial (protected) software without some kind of disk copier.

IN DEFENCE OF FLIGHT SIM 2

Can I leap to the defence of *Flight Simulator 2*, which was criticised by K.J. Brady in the May issue? *FS2* is not a game but a realistic simulation of flying. So realistic that it is actually used for instrument and navigation training in the US. Threfore it is not going to be just a case of booting up the disk and flying in to the wild blue skies, as with some other simulators. The manual is lengthy because of the program's authenticity. I will agree that it is short of practical examples of flying *FS2* and I would recommend the excellent companion book *Flying Flight Simulator 2*, by Charles Gulick (Microsoft £7.95).

The *FS2* database covers around 10,000 by 10,000 square miles, which explains why the scenery outside the main areas is rather featureless. In order to rectify this, a series of scenery disks which cover the entire US was produced.

Small airports do have a similar appearance in *FS2* but are geographically accurate. The main point is that runways look very alike in the real world too! I agree with Mr. Brady about *World War 1 Ace*. It's a very weak element. Finally, yes, the price is too high, but then I find that all ST and Amiga software is overpriced. However, with *FS2* I'll wager that you'll be flying it long after your other games have fallen into disuse.

Patrick Smith
Buckhurst Hill, Essex

You put up a very strong defence of the program – per-

PIRACY – THE DEBATE RAGES

...All the people I know with computers have some pirated software. I have no original programs and about 30 or 40 copies. The reason for this is cost. For the price of a single original game I can have 20 disks full of the best ST stuff around. Now, I ask, which would you rather have?

Falco, Scotland

...A. Doley and a whole host of other pirates are the most thoughtless selfish toe rags in the whole world. When I first heard of piracy I though how amazing it all was. I could get a game for the price of a blank disk when the real price was £20 – £25. Fortunately I happened to read a letter not unlike M. Pease's from Norwich, showing how destructive piracy really is. I hope M. Pease's letter changes a lot of other people's minds. I now really despise it and have never pirated a game in my life. To me £20 – £25 per game seems quite an attractive offer compared to no game at all.

D.Williams, Burbage

...In your last issue (no.7), M. Pease had quite a mouthful to say on piracy and I agree that piracy is wrong. But how can you expect people to purchase a piece of software for £10 – £20 when they can spend around £1.50 on hiring it, copying it and then sending it back. The people who hire out software are just as bad as pirates for giving them the temptation and as long as this 'innocent co-operation(?)' carries on I see no practical solution for piracy.

Daz, New Ollerton

.....May I congratulate Rowland Turner (issue 8) on being a moron without equal? If you copy software you are obtaining something you should be be paying for, without doing so. This is theft, therefore those who do this are thieves!

M. Knight, Harrow

...I am writing in reply to the 'reluctant pirate' (otherwise known as the hypocrite)...I don't believe a word he says – his reason for piracy is most probably price.

Mark Illingworth, Leeds

...The main argument against piracy is that it puts up software prices. I'm afraid this argument holds no water with me. I feel that Mr. Cracknell (Issue 6) has no right to call anyone a 'Plonker', and that his accusations are unfounded. If piracy puts prices up, why do the budget software houses, who presumably also suffer from piracy, account for sixty per cent of the market? The answer I feel is simple. The full price software houses, pre-budget, were out to make as much money as possible. Also, budget software houses do not spend vast sums on advertising, competitions and licences. Thus they can produce good software at a fraction of the price.

Rory Newman, Coulsdon

...Why do people copy software? In the case of 16-bit machines the simple answer is that the software is massively overpriced and often of disappointing quality...most 16-bit software makes little attempt to justify its price tag, and is often just a conversion of an 8-bit game with prettier graphics and sampled sound.

AV, Manchester

...Recently I went to a computer show where I was very impressed by the Acorn Archimedes demonstrations. One of my friends, a staunch Archimedes owner, took along a couple of blank disks in case any public domain software was going a-begging. He came away with the disks full of programs, some PD and demos, but with several commercial packages openly copied by the demonstrator.

A 'young' machine such as the Archie requires as much commercial support as possible; with rife piracy even on an official stand, it will not get it.

Stewart Russel, Glasgow

...What I'm suggesting is a survey of all ACE readers about piracy (anonymous, of course). At the moment we know very little about the actual fabric of piracy – exactly how widespread is it? Which computers are hit by it the most? What types of software are most in danger?

This could then be compiled and produced as an exclusive ACE article, of value to the user and the software house alike.

C.M Bateman, Ventnor

...I am still not convinced that the kind of piracy I am involved in is at all damaging to software houses, since most of the programs I obtain are not worth the effort of copying (*Xevious, Millipede, Star Trek*) and I would not have considered buying them anyway. However, some programs I have copied are so good that I have bought the original for the sake of the manuals and so on. The way I see it, piracy is a good way of vetting software and protects me from buying expensive rubbish, which I can scarce afford.

Bluebeard

...I have been following the Piracy controversy in your letters pages with great interest and before I add my tuppence-worth on the subject may I plead with you not to add those fateful words..SUBJECT CLOSED..for some time to come. The entertainment value derived from some of these letters far exceeds that of some of the £20 games which are often the subject of the debate.

The tone seems to have settled down to a stand-off between two extremes. On the one hand, we have holier-than-thou types who would sell you down the river for recording *Late Call*; on the other hand we have the pratts who only turn up on club night if the guy who collects the subs is off sick and someone is handing out pirate copies of the latest mega-games.

As usual, while the extremists are slagging each other off, we normal, reponsible, oft-forgotten majority are getting on with normal everyday activities such as thumbing the well-worn pages of ACE in case we missed something and saving up a quid a week out of our grant, or dole cheque, so that we can buy a 900+ rated game whch everyone else has had for months.

While we are all aware of the letter of the law regarding piracy, has it ever occurred to these people that the spirit of the law is to prevent widespread redsale of pirated copies for financial gain and not to invoke a witch hunt against the small-time user who copies the occasional program which he otherwise would not or could not purchase. In this case, no one is the loser as long as common sense prevails.

I would point out that I do not have any pirated software; my library consists of 30 PD or bundled disks and *Stars Wars*, which I bought myself for Christmas. I doubt, however, if I would turn down a copy of a good £200 application, because I would never be able to afford such a price and therefore could not be regarded as having been responsible for a lost sale, which is what all the fuss is about.

If you are unable to make sense of the arguments next time you are offered a pirated program, ask yourself 'Would I have bought this if I couldn't have got a free copy?' If the answer is 'Yes', then go out and buy the original and both you and the publishers will be the better for it. If, however, the answer is 'No', then enjoy the program with an easy conscience, for no-one has lost by it.

Keep arguing, you moralisers and rip-off merchants. Your letters are what makes life worth living for us real people...apart from ACE, the Atari ST and the thought that one of these days I might win a bit of free software.

Ian Beat
Scarborough

This subject is now ..CLOSED..unless, of course, your letter is more than usually interesting.

haps SubLogic would like to use your letter as a testimonial in their advertising?

LOATHSOME LICENCES

PRIZE LETTER

I recently sold my Spectrum to buy an Atari ST. I had become thoroughly disillusioned with the major software houses and the software they were and are producing for the Spectrum. It seems to me that originality and innovation died when Sir Clive Sinclair sold to Alan Sugar.

Back when Sinclair was not Amstrad, games were exciting and fun to play. Ultimate and Beyond were producing amazing games like *Atic Atac* and *Lords of Midnight* and these weren't the only amazing software houses, just the ones that I can remember. In those days a game sold because it was good.

Now it is very different. Games sell now because of their licences, it does not matter whether the game is any good or not, just so long as it carries the name of a coin-op, or cartoon, or film, etc. For instance, take *Out Run* on the Spectrum. I played it once and got to the 4th stage of the 5 possible (i.e. if I had gone 1 stage further I would have finished the game). Not only was it incredibly easy, it was also very tedious, in fact I have only played it once, and this game has sold 250,000 copies!

I am not steadfastly against licences for games, but I just wish that software houses spent more of their time developing original aoftware instead of converting more games from coin-ops to computers that they are not suitable for.

I sincerely hope that small companies emerge again, producing for the 16-bit computers new and original games, and I hope that you at ACE give them all the help they require. As a complete change of direction, please could you answer me these questions:

1. Why are ST games so expensive? I am studying for 'A' Levels at the moment, and forking out 20 quid for a game is a bit steep, if not extortionate.
2. I read a while ago that Mike Singleton was writing a game based on the battles in *The Lord Of The Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien. I am a great scholar of Tolkien and would like to know if this game is ever going to be released, and if so, will it be released for the ST? I think it was going to be published by Melbourne House.

All that remains for me to say is thank you for such a mature, thoughtful and informative magazine and I hope you keep up the good work.

Iain Meakin
Nottingham

Your long lament about licences will doubtless strike a sympthetic chord with many readers (and a few people in this office). But licences sell games, so you can't blame companies for doing it; and the licenced games that do sell help to pay for the development of the stuff you do like. We spoke to Mike Singleton recently and he doesn't seem to be doing anything Tolkienish at the moment. ST games are expensive because people will pay are prepared to pay what the companies are asking; but expect prices to fall over the next year.

SATISFIED GRANNY

Congratulations on a marvellous magazine. It gets better each month and now stands head and shoulders above the rest. When it first appeared on the shelves I hesitated about paying so much extra for yet another computer monthly but it is worth every penny.

It is especially nice to see all the reviews in colour and the different versions compared. Previously, I have read a review for a game then rushed out to buy it and hardly recognised it for the same program. Also, you cover such a wide range of topics not just arcade games. I realise that they make up the lion's share of the market but their appeal is rarely lasting. Being a grandmother, by now my tastes are fairly well-defined and when I buy a game for myself, I want something that will be playable in months and hopefully years to come.

I was delighted to see a section on role-playing games since they are rarely mentioned elsewhere. When totally stuck in one, it is hard to know where to turn for help as they are rarely mentioned in conventional adventure help columns. While expensive to buy they are good value as they represent weeks if not months of relaxation (frustration).

Joy Birley
Criccieth, Gwynedd

To the best of our knowledge you'rethe first grandmother who's written to ACE. We're delighted to print your letter, and delighted you like the magazine.

ST STINK

I have a query. One evening last month, after playing *Super Sprint* solidly for five hours, my head began to droop on to my ST keyboard, but when my head neared the keys I was instantly repelled by an extremely nauseating odour. Had I broken wind? Had I not washed recently? Or had my friend Nigel with the sweaty feet suddenly arrived? All of these questions entered the space between the ears. After answering them all in the negative, I decided that further investigation was required.

To my horror, I realised that it was actually my computer itself which was producing this horrible smell. Liquorice, to be precise.

I wonder if could please tell me if you know of anybody else who suffers from a liquorice-smelling keyboard, or am I the only one in this wide world of ours to be so highly flavoured?

Ben Webster
Pocklington, York

Well, many people do smell, but we don't think you should blame yourself. Have you perhaps been eating liquorice allsorts near your computer, and drooling over the keyboard? If not, then we can only ssume your are the victim of sabotage.

HOME BREWED GRUMBLES

I would like to complain about the lack of 8-bit, especially Spectrum, adventures reviewed in ACE. I mean the home-written type especially, as if adventure writing and selling are to continue at least some attention must be paid to those home-based companies. Without this attention these small adventure producers may never be able to expand, or at least come to the attention of the bigger software houses.

The section on graphics/animation is usually always a piece I skip straight past. When looking a bit further in to it I still find it full of 16-bit terms, 16-bit graphics, 16-bit software and totally pointless pictures of graphics movement and animation. This space could be cut down to one page of pictures and text instead of four long, boring pages. Please remember that there are only a small number of 16-bit owners compared to 8-bit owners.

Patrick Walsh
Slough

I get it – ditch the graphics and fill the extra space with......8-bit home-brewed adventures! On the Spectrum. Adventures are already covered in depth by The Pilgrim (God Bless his bald little head) and he often mentions home-brews. Secondly, the graphics section is one of the most popular features in ACE. Although many of the ilustrations are produced on an Amiga, most of the techniques explained by Brian Larkman in his DIY series apply to most computers – whether 8 or 16 bit. And next month we'll be reviewing a new 8-bit art package (for the Amstrad). If there were more 8-bit art stuff around, we'd cover it.

CPC DISK

I am thinking of saving up for a disk drive for my Amstrad CPC 464. Could you please tell me what difference the disks make. Do they give better graphics? Do they produce graphics as well as text on games such as *Guild of Thieves* and *The Pawn*?

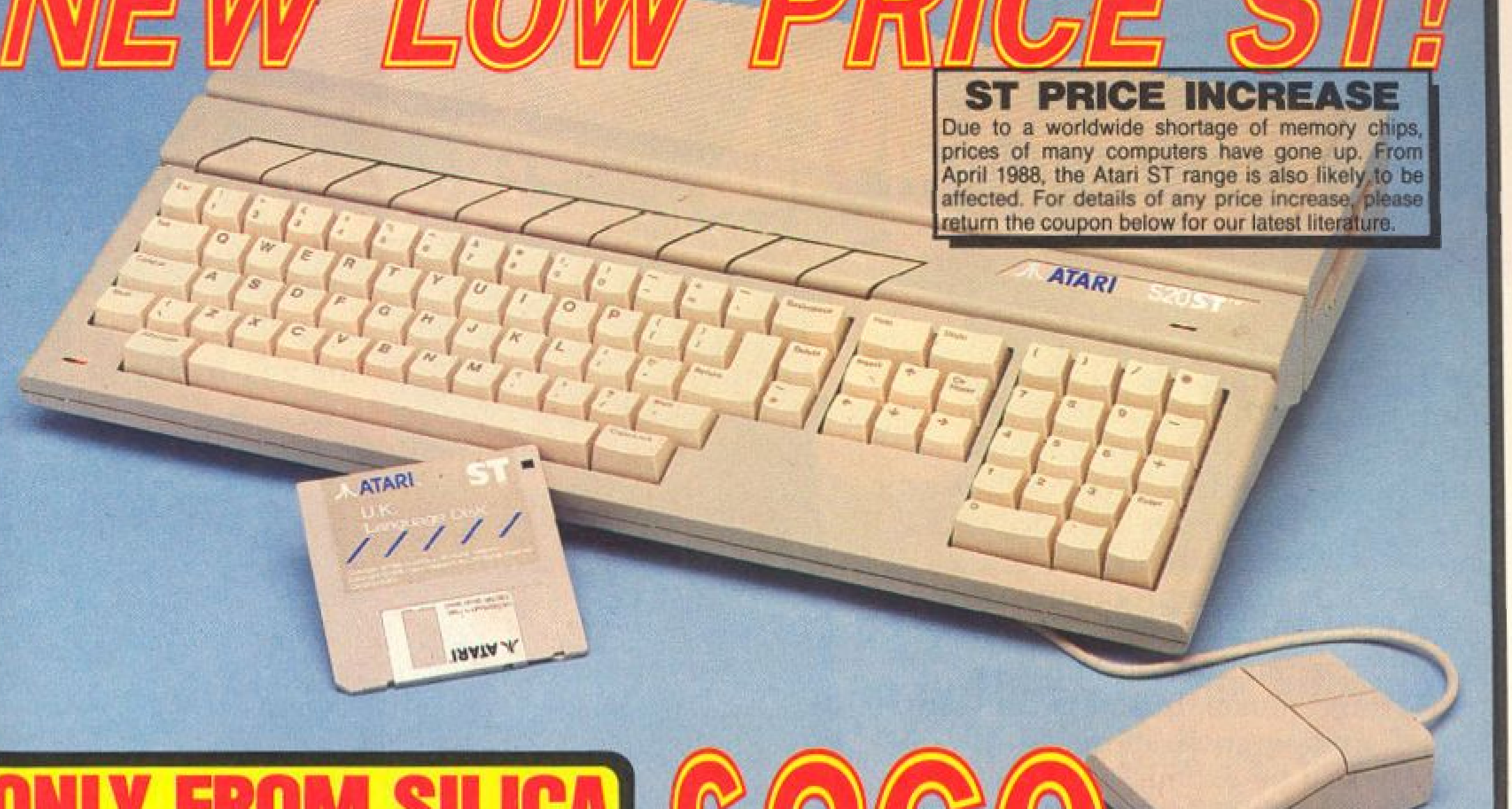
Neil Whitley
Wolverhampton

First of all, a disk drive will mean much quicker loading of any software you buy – but the software will be rather more expensive. Secondly, The Pawn and Guild of Thieves won't run on your 464, even with a disk drive. To run software like that you'll need a memory upgrade as well, such as the one supplied by DK Tronics.

NEW LOW PRICE ST!

ST PRICE INCREASE

Due to a worldwide shortage of memory chips, prices of many computers have gone up. From April 1988, the Atari ST range is also likely to be affected. For details of any price increase, please return the coupon below for our latest literature.



£260 +VAT=£299

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FREE STARTER KIT - *Only From Silica*

When you purchase any Atari ST keyboard, you will not only receive the best value for money computer on the market, but you will also receive the following from Atari Corporation as part of the package:

** BASIC Language Disk * BASIC Manual * ST Owners Manual * TOS/GEM on ROM*

If you buy your ST from Silica Shop, you will also receive:

** NEOchrome Sampler - colour graphics program * 1st Word - Word Processor*

In addition, we at Silica would like to see you get off to a flying start with your new computer, so we have put together a special **ST STARTER KIT** worth over £100, which we are giving away **FREE OF CHARGE** with every ST computer purchased at our normal retail prices. This kit is available **ONLY FROM SILICA** and is aimed at providing users with a valuable introduction to the world of computing. We are continually upgrading the ST Starter Kit, which contains public domain and other licensed software, as well as books, magazines and accessories all relevant to ST computing. Return the coupon below for full details.

DEDICATED SERVICING - *Only From Silica*

At Silica Shop, we have a dedicated service department of seven full time Atari trained technical staff. This team is totally dedicated to servicing Atari computer products. Their accumulated knowledge, skill and experience makes them second to none in their field. You can be sure that any work carried out by them is of the highest standard. A standard of servicing which we believe you will find **ONLY FROM SILICA**. In addition to providing full servicing facilities for Atari ST computers (both in and out of warranty), our team is also able to offer memory and modulator upgrades to ST computers.

1Mb RAM UPGRADE: Our upgrade on the standard Atari 520ST-M or 520ST-FM keyboard will increase the memory from 512K to a massive 1024K. It has a full 1 year warranty and is available from Silica at an additional retail price of only **£86.96** (+VAT = £100).

TV MODULATOR UPGRADE: Silica can upgrade the 1040ST-F to include a TV modulator so that you can then use it with your TV set. This is an internal upgrade and does not involve any untidy external boxes. A cable to connect your ST to any domestic TV is included in the price of the upgrade which is only £49 (inc VAT). The upgrade is also available for early 520ST computers at the same price.

THE FULL STOCK RANGE - *Only From Silica*

We aim to keep stocks of all Atari related products and our warehouse carries a stock of over £½ million. We import many software titles direct from the USA and you will find that we have new releases in advance of many of our competitors. Unlike dealers who may only stock selected titles, we have the full range. In addition, we carry a complete line of all books which have been written about the Atari ST. A range as wide as ours is something you will find is available **ONLY FROM SILICA**.

AFTER SALES SUPPORT - *Only From Silica*

Rest assured that when you buy your ST from Silica Shop, you will be fully supported. Our free mailings give news of releases and developments. This will help to keep you up to date with new software releases as well as what's happening in the Atari market. And in addition, our sales staff are at the end of a telephone line to service all of your Atari requirements. If you purchase an ST from Silica and would like any technical advice, we have a full time technical support team to help you get the best from your computer. Because we have both the staff and the systems specifically dedicated to providing after sales service on Atari ST computers, we are confident that our users enjoy an exceptionally high level of support. This can be received **ONLY FROM SILICA**.

FREE CATALOGUES - *Only From Silica*

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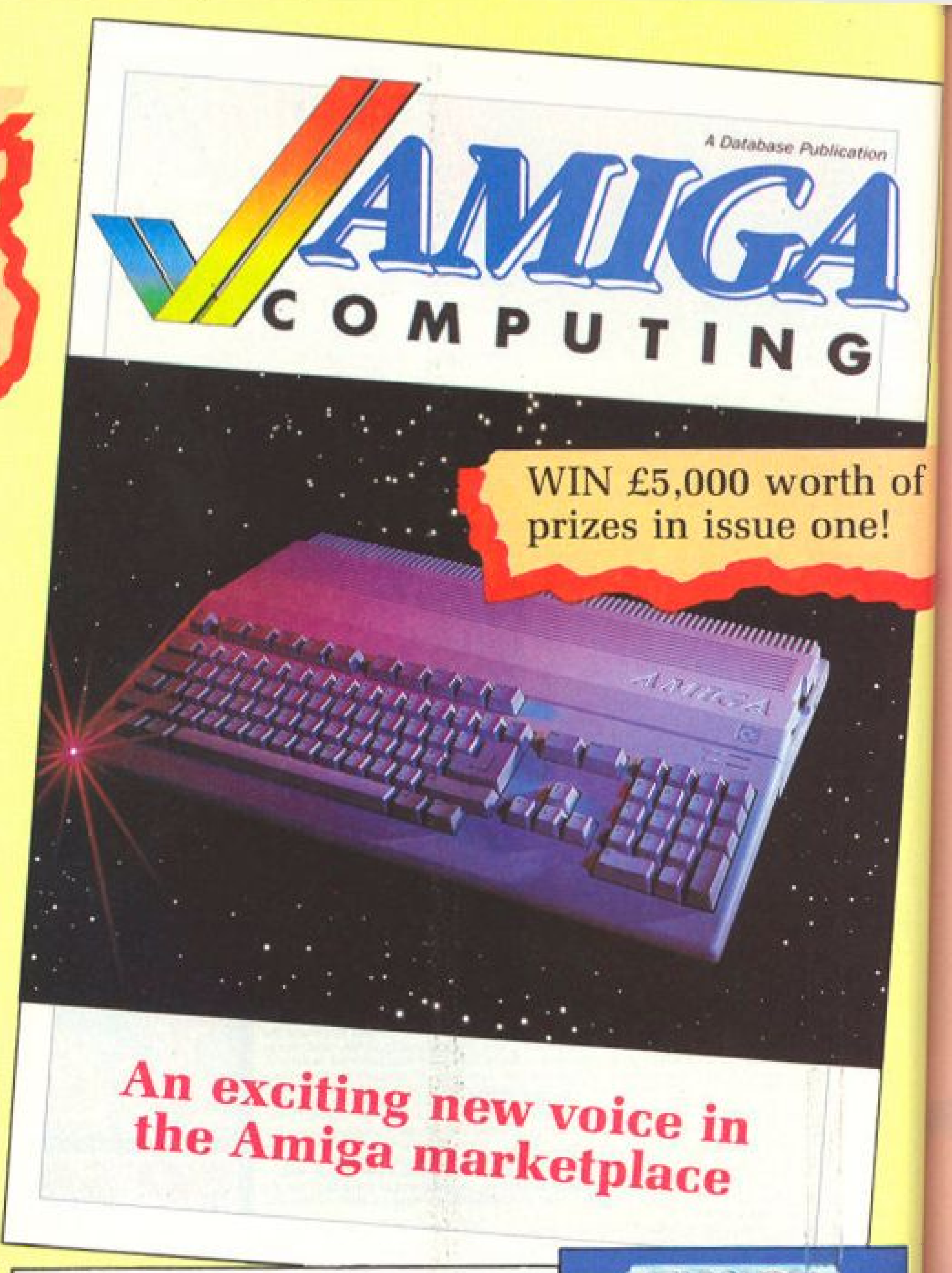
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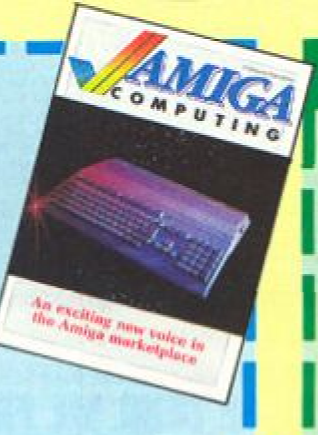
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ACE PINK PAGES

Want to know the best games to run on your micro? Thinking of upgrading to a bigger machine? Look no further - all the information you need is in the Ace Pink Pages. You'll also find our regular Reader to Reader section, plus this month's brain-teasers in the Random Access pages.

ACE RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

ARCADE ADVENTURES

These games usually give the player a joystick controlled character with which to explore the huge game area.

AIRBALL

Microdeal ● Atari ST £24.95dk

Multi-coloured three dimensional arcade adventure that owes something to the Ultimate style but is years ahead in terms of graphic detail and presentation. You, as the airball in question, must negotiate corridors and rooms full of various obstacles - all spelling instant death. An outstanding rendition of a popular genre.

DUNGEON MASTER

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £24.99dk

A fascinating arcade adventure cum role-playing game that gives four characters to guide through a series of dungeons on a quest to find the Firestaff. Superb graphics help to create an enthralling game that will keep you playing for a long time to come.

EAGLE'S NEST

Pandora ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

This is one of the better *Gauntlet* clones, especially on the 16-bit machines. The military flavour of the arcade adventure adds atmosphere and if you like this particular style of game, you won't be disappointed with Eagle's Nest.

HEAD OVER HEELS

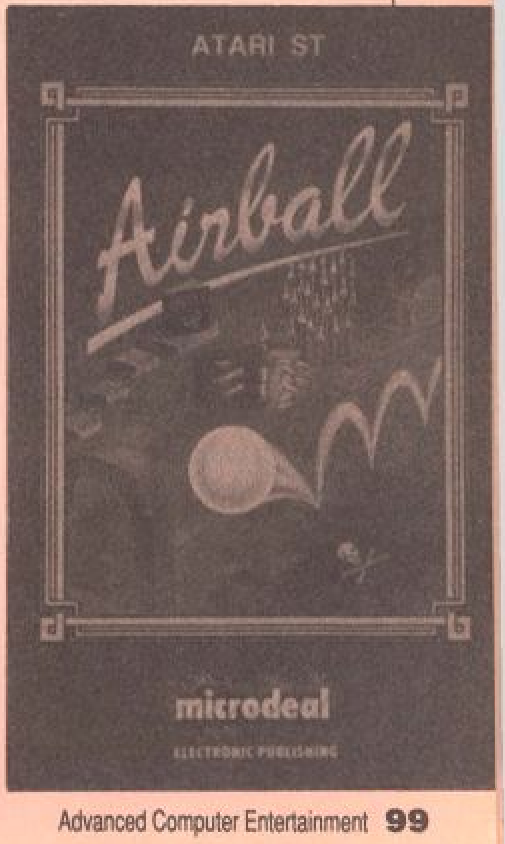
Ocean ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● MSX £8.95cs ● IBM PC £19.95dk

3D exploration reaches its peak with this huge intricate masterpiece. You play two characters - Head and Heels - as you search for the crowns that will free the galaxy. The puzzles can get very difficult indeed, and you'll often have to split Head and Heels up to use their different capabilities. The game's 300 locations are wittily drawn, and the animation is excellent throughout. A real classic.

MAGIC KNIGHT TRILOGY

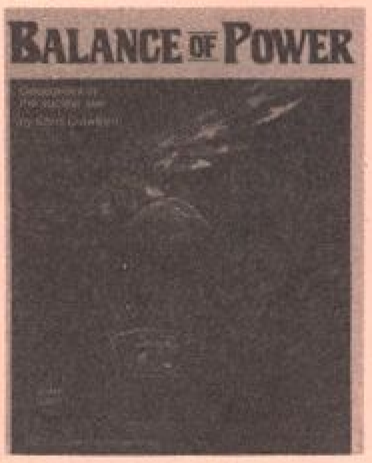
Mastertronic ● *Knight tyme* Spectrum £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs ● *Spellbound* Spectrum £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs ● C64 £2.99cs ● *Stormbringer* Spectrum £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs

This trilogy is a series of menu-driven arcade adventures which, as well as all the expected running and jumping, have a complex system of interaction between characters. In *Spellbound* you must rescue Gimbal the Wizard from the fearsome Castle of Karn; in *Knight Tyme* you have to find a way back in time after being catapulted into the 25th century, while in *Stormbringer*, the final part, we find that the magic knight has been split in two, one part good, the other evil. You can't kill yourself, so the only solution is to merge the two halves. But how? Lots of action, plenty of thought and good graphics make all three winners.



STRATEGY GAMES

The games for megalomaniacs. The games listed in this section will really test your mettle on the battlefield.



BALANCE OF POWER

Mindscape/Mirrorsoft ● Amiga £26.95dk ● Atari ST £26.95dk ● IBM PC £26.95dk ● Mac £26.95dk

Definitive strategy game for 16-bitters. The player takes the role of one of the superpowers, while either the computer or a friend takes the other. Then it's a case of trying to win friends and influence people on a global scale. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including supplying arms or financial aid to radical factions in the hope of toppling a government which is not receptive to the great American or Russian dream (depending on which side you're playing). It's complex, involving and it's difficult to play in ten minute sessions. Absorbing stuff that gives an insight into the devious world of geopolitics.

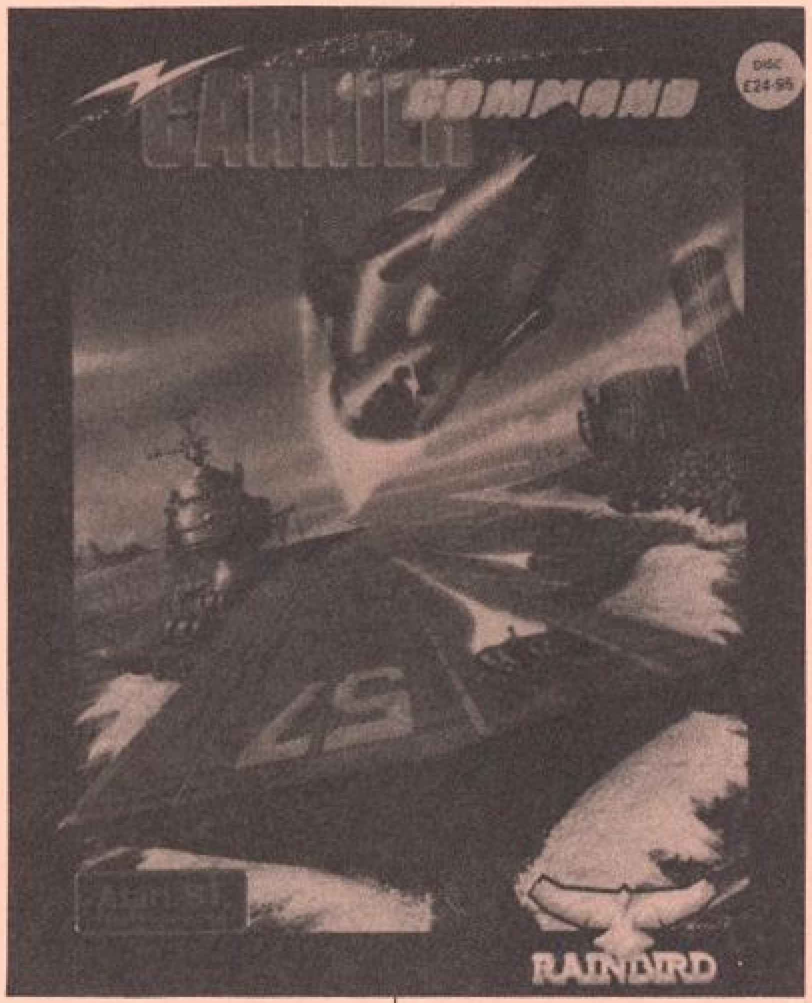
CARRIER COMMAND

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● Spectrum £14.95cs £15.95dk

A magnificent strategy game spiced with some great arcade action – check out the main review on page 44.

DIPLOMACY

Leisure Genius ● C64 £12.95cs £14.95dk ● PC £24.95dk



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THE YORK COMPUTER CENTRE, 9 Davygate Centre, York Y01 2SU. Telephone: (0904) 641862

The grand old man of nasty negotiation boardgames finally made it onto home computer and how! The game can handle up to seven players and it's an engrossing and madly addictive game that's a must for micro megalomaniacs.

UMS

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk ● Macintosh £34.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk

Rainbird's *Universal Military Simulator* is designed to simulate a conflict between two forces on a user-definable terrain that can be viewed in three-dimensions from any one of eight directions. The program heralds a new era in 16-bit computer wargaming. The ST version is available now with the other versions following shortly.

VULCAN

CCS ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs

An elegant, simple and ingenious wargame, *Vulcan* covers the Tunisian campaign of 1942-43. A huge playing area and air attack phase make the game an improvement over the same author's earlier works *Arnhem* and *Desert Rats*. *Vulcan* is fast, efficient and simple to play, and no self-respecting wargamer should be without it.

SIMULATIONS

Games that put you at the contols. Whether you're flying helicopters,or aeroplanes, or steering bobsleighs, simulation games can become very involving.

BOBSLEIGH

Digital Intergration ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk

Bobsleigh is a thrilling game with enough strategy involved to add another dimension to a highly competent and addictive simulation. Have you got the stamina to win your way into one of the top three positions by the end of the season? Remember, sponsors don't back losers. Unfortunately, though *Bobsleigh* is available for the C64, it's a poor game compared to the Amstrad and Spectrum versions and is therefore not recommended.

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

Electronic Arts ● C64 £9.95cs £16.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

Chuck Yeager's flight trainer takes the flight simulator genre a step further by including a training option. Chuck will guide the novice through such difficult moves as aileron loops and rolls. With so much in one package it will take many hours of instructive fun to master all the avilable options.

FALCON

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £49.95dk ● Amiga £49.95d ● IBM PC £49.95dk

A magnificent flight sim that gives you a dozen missions at any of five ranks, so there's an awful lot to get through. Check out the review on page 69.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2

Sub-Logic ● Atari ST £49.95dk ● Amiga £49.95d ● IBM PC £49.95dk

The venerable godfather of flight simulations, *Flight Sim II* is the standard by which all others are judged. Although it spent a zillion weeks on top of the US charts, it's difficult to get hold of in the UK. If you have the technology, this is an essential purchase.

GUNSHIP

Microprose ● PC £34.95dk

Excellent graphics, involving simulation and a variety of missions make this one of the better PC games. Piloting your 'copter around in order to zap various gooks may not be terribly tasteful – but if you can stand the politics you should have a lot of fun.

BOBSLEIGH
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Access/US Gold ● Spectrum £8.99 ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk

If you only buy one golf simulation for your collection, make sure it's *Leaderboard*. It's head and shoulders above everything else on the playability and realism stakes, easy to get into, with delightful graphics and some wicked courses. Once you've mastered the courses on the original version, tackle *Tournament Leaderboard* and then *World Class Leaderboard* (based on real courses, including St Andrews, and also containing the Gauntlet Country Club, a course devised by Access to be as difficult as possible).

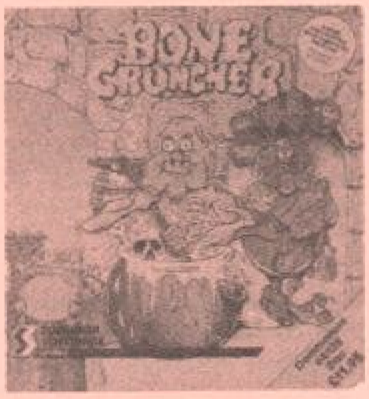
TOMAHAWK

Digital Integration ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk

One of the all-time great flight simulators, *Tomahawk* also has a strong combat edge to it. Flying a US Army Apache helicopter is a complex business, and the game's realistic controls make no concessions for learner pilots. Choose one of the three combat missions and you can fly out to attack ground targets, while keeping a weather eye open for enemy aircraft. Landscape, buildings and vehicles are all drawn in crisp vector graphics.

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without neccesarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.



BONECRUNCHER

Superior Software ● C64 £9.95cs £11.95dk

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a *Boulderdash* rip-off. However there are a number of highly innovative gameplay features which give *Bonecruncher* a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.

BOULDERDASH

Prism Leisure Corporation ● Spectrum £2.99cs ● C64 £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs

A game that has everything – instant addiction, long-term challenge, frenetic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, digging away earth and boulders to get at them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex, but great fun. *Boulderdash* is a classic you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin/Vortex ● Spectrum £7.99cs ● C64 £9.99cs 14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to connect a laser beam to a receiver and at the same time destroy a number of cells that are on-screen as well. You'll need to make full use of the mirrors, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and refracting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 59 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's horribly addictive.

NEBULUS

Hewson ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £7.95cs

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ledges that form the route. It's a highly original game game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good looking, playable winner of a game.

SENTINEL

Firebird ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Bizarre and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clear brain and fast trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large – 10,000 possible landscapes – game.

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Boulderdash clone that completely outdoes the original on this particular machine. Again (see *Boulderdash*, above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns over 100 different screens – with a time limit for each screen. *Skulldiggery* scores on playability (easier screens to begin with and a choice of starting point) and its entertaining two-player option.

SPORE

Bulldog ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

The winning combination of strategy, frenzied blasting and great graphics make Spore a worthy full-price release – what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for £1.99!

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Mirrorsoft ● Spectrum £8.99cs £19.99dk ● C64 £8.99cs £12.99dk ● Amstrad £8.99cs £12.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● IBM PC £19.99dk

A fascinating geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzler turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen: your task is to guide them down and pack them in tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their arcade aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.

THINK!

Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Originally released by Ariolasoft at full price, but now available for a fraction of that from Firebird. It's a horribly addictive game played on a 6x6 grid – either one or two player – in which you attempt to connect four counters, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. A compelling puzzle which incorporates many additional features and skill levels.

XOR

Logotron ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● BBC £9.95cs £12.95dk

Extremely tricky maze game involving the player controlling two shields, and collecting masks through 15 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, fish and chickens lie in wait, often blocking the masks and just waiting to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, the fish and chickens are the least of your worries as bombs, transporters and dolls crop up to conspire against you. Smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning to complete successfully.

BRAIN GAMES

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Rummy-like oriental game of strategy and chance. A tutor program and short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike.

INFOGRAMES' BRIDGE

Infogrames ● Amstrad £12.95cs £15.95dk ● MSX £12.95cs

Graphically the best of all contract bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitably green baize background. Plays a good game (for a computer, which after all is a bit short in the imagination and flair department), and features a wide range of options and bidding conventions which you can toggle on and off according to your style.

POWERPLAY

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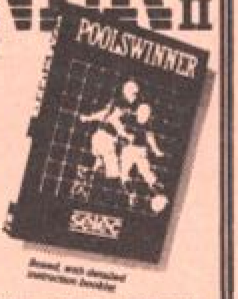

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If you want to try out your general knowledge, we reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz than with the admittedly monster-selling *Trivial Pursuit*. *Powerplay* is graphically very pretty in its setting on Mount Olympus, home of the Gods.

SCRABBLE

Leisure Genius ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £12.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk

The hugely popular word game translated very successfully onto the micro. Fast, excellent display, and a surprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange-looking words on occasions). Good enough to give even strong human opponents a tough game at the higher levels.

Leisure Genius
COMPUTER
SCRABBLE

ARCADE-STYLE

Including coin-op conversions. Games with a high fun factor and plenty of addictiveness feature here.

ARKANOID

Imagine ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari XL/XE £8.95cs ● Atari ST £14.95dk ● MSX £8.95cs ● IBM PC £19.95dk

Conversion from *Arkanoid* the coin-op, in its turn the best version of the classic *Breakout*. Simple in concept: the player controls a bat at the base of the screen, whizzing it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the bat to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Eliminate all the bricks and move on to the next of 33 screens. Clever extra features contribute to the addictiveness. As a faithful coin-op conversion, *Arkanoid* comes out top, but for a different slant on the same theme and some nifty music, try ASL's *Impact*, which also builds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

BOUNDER

Gremlin Graphics ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk

A great arcade bounce-em-up, and very addictive too. You guide a ball as it bounces from one platform to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay aloft longer or gain a mystery bonus. Fill in a gap or hit one of the game's many nasties, however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus bouncing sections at the end of each level help vary the pace, and those tough gaps really keep you coming back for more. Bright, witty graphics, great music – and it's so playable.

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Playability is the essence of this two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play bubble-blowing dinosaurs, travelling through 100 maze-and-platform screens, fighting off the 'bullies' by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into juicy fruit. More firepower and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult later screens. Enormously good fun, if a little on the cutesy side. Can also be played as one player against the computer.

BUGGY BOY

Elite ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.99cs £14.95dk

A non-stop action driving game that will keep even the most ardent *Out Run* fans busy for a long while. Collect the time bonuses in the attempt to complete the five gruelling courses. Instantly playable and highly addictive, *Buggy Boy* should be on any racing fan's shopping list

CONQUEROR

Superior ● Archimedes £24.95dk (Amiga and ST versions under developement)

Drive around in your very own tank! Blast the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. For full details see page 54.

ATARI ST DISK

COSMIC CAUSEWAY

Gremlin ● £9.99cs £14.99dk

The follow-up to the very popular bouncing ball game *Trailblazer*. The 24 stages of the scrolling landscape race toward you at breakneck speed as you try to guide your ball through the mulitude of obstacles. Less technically demanding than *Trailblazer* but much more fun and with tremendous variety.

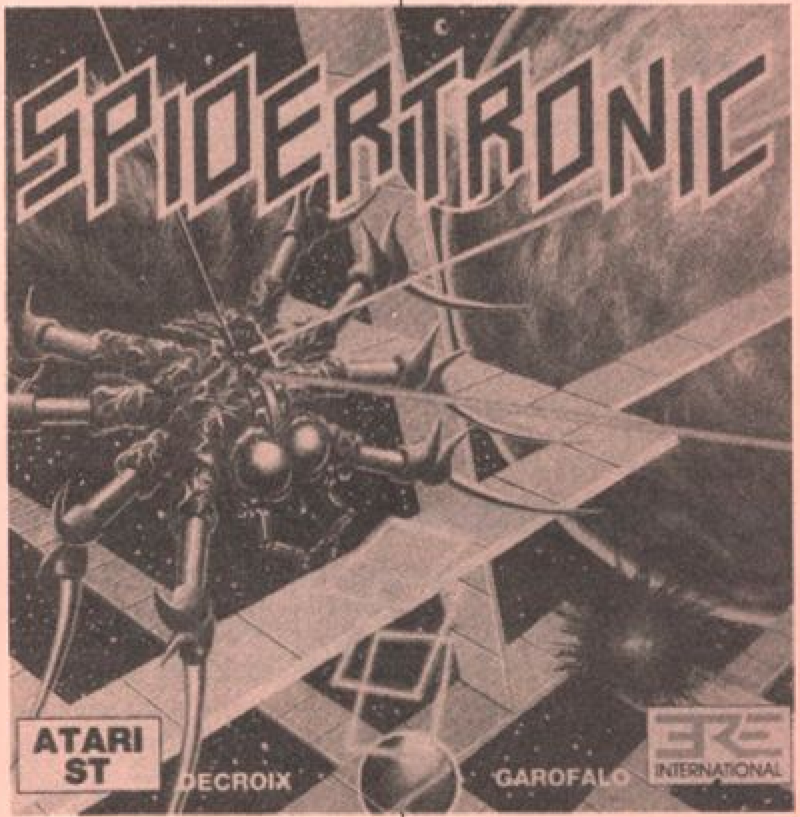
EXOLON

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Graphically superb horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up in which you run, duck and jump your way along a planet's surface blasting away at alien defences. A gun and a missile launcher are used to blast the foes, but if things are still too tough then you can grab an exoskeleton for extra protection and fire power.

HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

Vortex (available on *The Best of 3D* compilation from US Gold) ● Spectrum £8.99cs ● Amstrad £8.99cs



Each game in this compilation is an excellent example of Vortex's 3D animation and tough gameplay, but *Highway Encounter* stands out in both departments, as you plot your route along said highway fighting off threats from a mutant tribe of dustbins.

OIDS

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £19.99

A magnificent *Thrust*-ish blast. The Oids are relying on you to save them, but the Biocretes aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planetoids - great stuff!

PITSTOP 2

Epyx/US Gold ● Available only on Epyx Epics compilation ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk (in compilation with *Winter Games* and *Summer Games 2*)

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, tyre blow-outs and of course the all-important pitstops guarantee to give you hand cramp and your brain a real racing treat.

SPIDERTRONIC

Ere International ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting coloured panels in the correct order. An addictive game that gets you thinking, for more information see the review on page 49.

STARGLIDER

Rainbird ● Spectrum £14.95cs £19.95dk ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● IBM PC £19.95dk

Starglider is a shoot-em-up cum strategy game boasting vector graphics at their very best. The screen is essentially your view from the cockpit, your objective is to destroy the 'starglider', flagship of the Egron forces who have invaded your homeland Novenia. Standard issue scenario, but an outstanding game.

SUMMER GAMES

Epyx/US Gold ● C64 £9.95 cs £14.95dk ● Atari XE £14.95dk (*Summer Games 1* only) ● IBM PC £29.95dk

Epyx sporting simulations are of high quality but none have quite captured the

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EPYX
SUMMER GAMES

playability and style of the original *Summer Games* and its immediate successor, *Summer Games 2*. One to six players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, springboard diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, pole vault – and others – with lovely large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your athlete can be complex so practice is recommended.

SUPER SPRINT

Electric dreams ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs ● Spectrum £9.99cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk

One of the better coin-op conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more tortuous circuits that appear later in the game.

THRUST

Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of real-life physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. Very mean, very addictive.

THUNDERCATS

Elite ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

The game based on the hit TV series/comic/plastic toy. It's a side-on view scroller that just oozes gameplay. Each of the game's 14 levels is a straight line dash from start to finish with a multitude of obstacles to avoid along the way. Graphically impressive and compulsively playable too.

URIDIUM

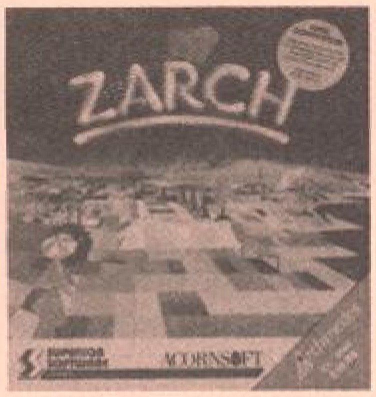
Hewson ● Spectrum £8.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● BBC £9.95cs £14.95dk

The piece de resistance of scrolling shoot-em-ups: blast the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic-looking dreadnoughts and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the opposition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent *Paradroid*.

ZARCH

Superior Software ● Archimedes £19.95dk ● Amiga and Atari ST versions under development.

ACE'S highest rated game to date. A solid three-dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and timelessly addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. *Zarch* could do for the Archimedes what 'the juggler' did for the Amiga.



SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section.

ATF

Digital Integration ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk

Excellent combat/flight simulator that's a bit of a change for Digital Integtration, the simulation specialists. The emphasis is on solid action, the result being a sure-fire hit.

DRILLER

Incentive ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Spectrum £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £17.95dk ● IBM PC £19.95dk

This three-dimensional masterpiece of exploration and adventure took a year to

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develop, but the wait was worth it. A whole world was crammed into 8-bit micros to give the player such a feeling of 'being there' it's uncanny. It's bold, dazzlingly original and very playable. A milestone in computer entertainment.

ELITE

Firebird ● Spectrum £14.95cs ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Amstrad £12.95cs £14.95dk ● BBC £12.95cs £14.95dk (available from Superior Software)

Still the best space trading game, *Elite* set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety to the gameplay. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or run the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way there's a nice line in zero-G dogfighting, and as big a task as you'll find anywhere.

MAGNETRON

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk

Puzzles and action Steve Turner style. Save the world by dismantaling eight satellites. Steal parts from the enemy droids to upgrade your own droid, and hopefully make your job a little easier. The ideal game for all *Quazatron* fans looking for a similar, new challenge.

MATCH DAY 2

Ocean ● Spectrum £7.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Definitely *the* football game on micros; magnificent animation, great gameplay, vicious and skillful computer opponents. Various improvents over the original make this a must for all computer football fans.

QUEDEX

Thalamus ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly pleasing: you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens or 'planes' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.

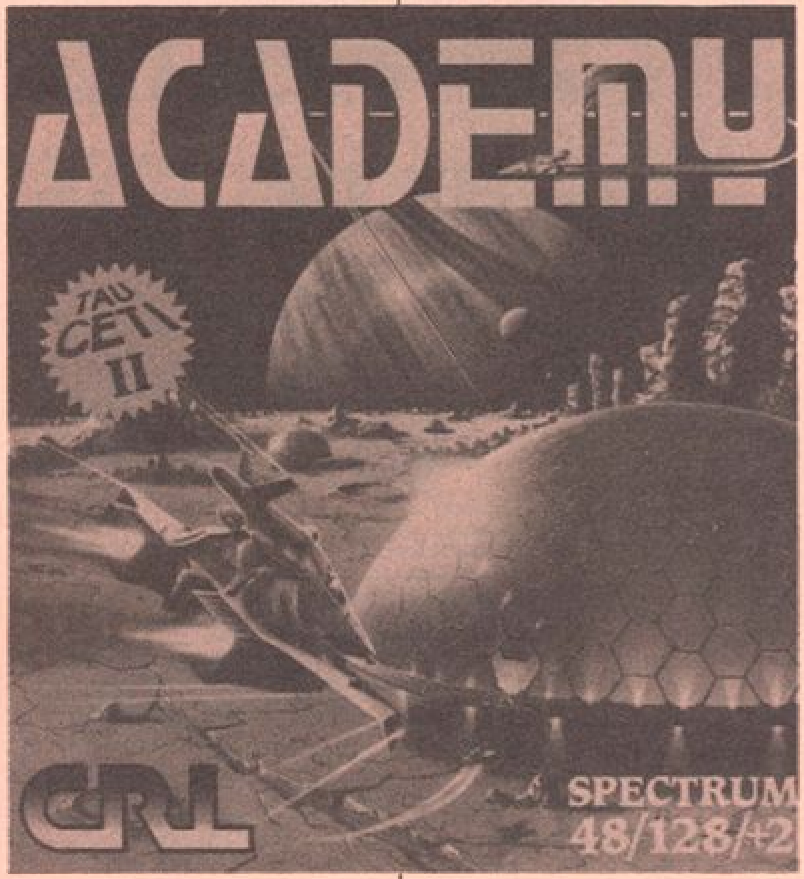
SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams ● Spectrum £9.99cs ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk

Tremendous stuff; steer your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect jewels, against a fiendish time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of catwalks, ramps, towers, and trampolines surrounded by lethal drops – and NO safety rails. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge gaps, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of nice touches, but the exploration's the thing.

TAU CETI/ ACADEMY

CRL ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk



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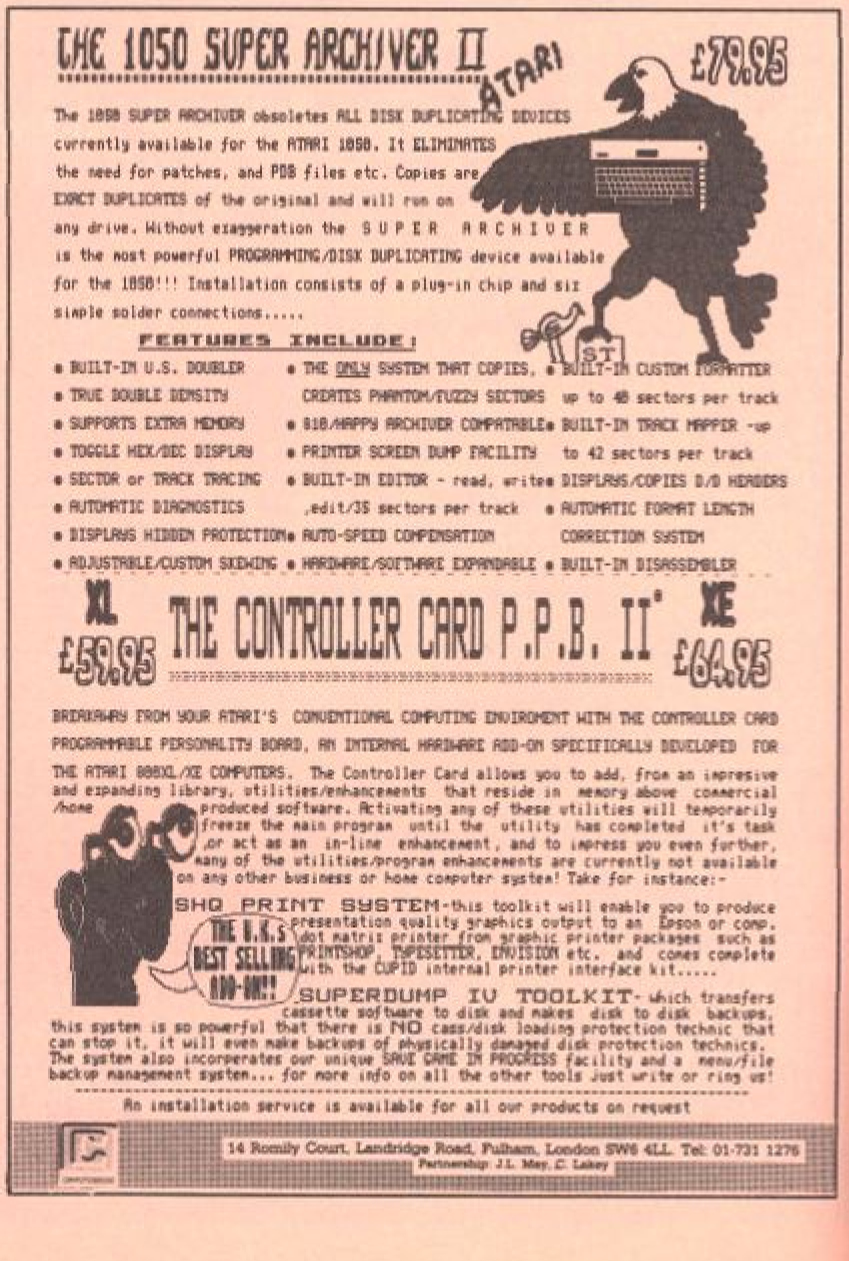
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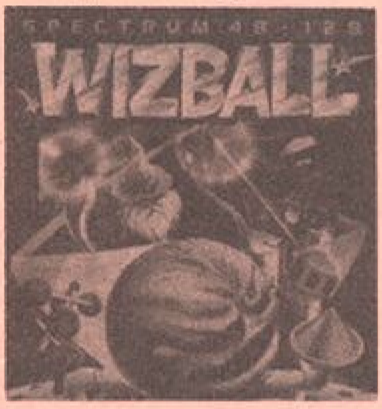
● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk

Flight simulator/shoot-em-up and its sequel which are both incredibly smooth and well put together. The attention to detail is impeccable as you set off on hair-raising missions as a space cadet. In *Academy* you get to design your own space skimmer craft as well.

WIZBALL

Ocean ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● Amstrad £8.95cs £12.95dk ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk

A compelling and original ball game in which you become the wizball and must set out to conquer the 'colour creatures' which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and drab. Controlling the wizball is great fun and makes this one of the most playable games to have appeared for a long time.



ADVENTURES

Adventure games require text input from the player and give a text response in return. There are many sub-categories, involving icon-control, graphic depiction of locations, and even speech output.

THE BARD'S TALE

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk

Build a party of up to six adventurers and sally forth through the city in search of treasure, combat, and fame. Your character develops in experience during play and the task involved is pretty immense – don't expect to finish it inside a month or two.

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Activision ● C64 £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● IBM PC £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

Infocom's attempt to muscle in on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quendor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Text-only, but with an on-screen mapping facility.

BEYOND ZORK

GUILD OF THIEVES

Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls ● C64 £19.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Macintosh £24.95dk

Britain's newest adventure software house produces a classic, traditional treasure hunt with state-of-the-art graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful parser helps create a convincing game-world with humour and imagination.

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Rainbird/Level 9 ● C64 £14.95cs ● Spectrum 128 £14.95cs ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● IBM PC £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Macintosh £19.95dk

THE GUILD OF THIEVES
By Magnetic Scrolls

Level 9, Britain's oldest adventure programming family, have put together three of their classic releases, *Colossal Adventure*, *Dungeon Adventure*, and *Adventure Quest* on one disk. The games have been uprated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.

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Sinclair Plus 2 Computer Inc: Tape Recorder + Joystick	149.95	125.95 B
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● HARDWARE UPG

	BUYLINES	GRAPHICS & SOUND	
ACORN ARCHIMEDES			
THE RANGE consists of the 305, 310 and 310M, packaged as keyboard, mouse and drive with or without monitor (colour or mono). M denotes the inclusion of a PC emulator **THE PROCESSOR** is the Acorn ARM and the 305 comes with 512K, while the 310 boasts 1Mb of memory. ● **Recommended retail price**: from £801.60 for the 305 alone to £1188.00 for a 310M with colour monitor	**FULL PRICE** is the order of the day so far, since it hasn't been around long enough to become a second-hand buy. ● **One year's guarantee** – faulty machines should be returned to the dealer.	**RESOLUTION** is either 320 x 256, 640 x 256 or a pin-sharp 640 x 512 with multi-sync monitor. With a palette of 4096, up to 256 colours on-screen at once (in 320 x 256 mode) or 16 (640 x 512). The Archie boasts one sprite, and fast graphics. Note that a TV modulator is not provided. ● **Monitor output**: b/w — composite video; colour – RGB + sync.	**THE INTERNAL SPEAKER** is good quality, while the Archimedes also has a **MIDI interface, stereo output, 16 channels** (8 stereo pairs) and covers **six octaves!**
APPLE MACINTOSH			
THE TWO MODELS in the range – the SE and Macintosh II – comprise a monitor with built-in CPU and disk drive and a separate keyboard. **1Mb MEMORIES** are common to both, the SE using a Motorola 68000 processor, and the II a Motorola 68020. ● **Recommended Retail Price:** SE £2,294.25 upwards; II £4,329.75 upwards.	**NOT CHEAP** even if you go second-hand. There's not much of a discount market in new Macs, so you generally have to pay list price. Check small ads in specialist magazines for used versions. ● **'APPLECARE'** is an optional 'insurance' scheme for covering the cost of repairs outside the guarantee period, but apart from that you just get the standard **one year's warranty**.	**VERY SHARP** graphics are a feature of the black and white SE, with resolution of 512 x 342. The II, though boasts figures of 1027 x 760, and a palette – with colour monitor – of 16 million! Between 16 and 256 colours can be used on-screen at once. For such a powerful machine, the graphics are only reasonably fast, while there are no sprites. A TV modulator is not supplied.	● **Monitor output:** Integral monitor. **GOOD SPEAKER QUALITY** goes with **4 channels** and good overall performance. Third party **MIDI interfaces** are available, and although the SE doesn't offer stereo output, the II does.
ATARI ST			
THE TWO basic models in the range – the 520STFM and 1040STF – are supplemented by various Mega STs, and come as a keyboard with built-in disk drive. **512K OF MEMORY** is standard on the 520STFM, while the 1040STF offers 1Mb. Mega STs typically have 2 or 4Mb. All use Motorola 68000 processors. ● **Recommended Retail Price:** 520STFM £299.99; 1040STF £499.99	**GOOD PACKAGES** can sometimes be found, but as a rule you won't get much under the RRP. Check out classified ads in magazines for second-hand buys. ● **One year's guarantee** as usual, and faulty machines should be returned to the dealer.	**HIGH, MEDIUM AND LOW RESOLUTION** modes exist, with high res (640 x 400) available only in monochrome. Medium res (640 x 200) can handle 4 colours from a palette of 512, while low res (320 x 200) offers 16. The 520STFM can plug into a **TV**, but other models need a modulator. There are no sprites. **Monitor Output:** RGB/Monochrome	**MIDI INTERFACE** there may be, but no stereo output. Three channels, 8 octaves and envelope shaping complete the package.
COMMODORE AMIGA			
THREE MODELS have been produced – the Amiga 500, A1000 (now discontinued) and A2000 – and are supplied as a keyboard with built-in disk drive. Packaging of the A1000 will depend on individual dealers. **ONLY 256K** was offered by the A1000, but the **500** has **512K** and the **A2000 1024K**. All use the **Motorola 68000** processor. ● **Recommended Retail Price: A500** £499.99; **A1000** none – discontinued; **A2000** £1236.25	**CHECK DEALERS** for special packages by all means, but as a rule Amigas are not at present sold below the RRP. Second-hand availability is limited as yet. **Faulty machines** should be returned to the dealer within the guarantee period.	**THE GRAPHICS CO-PROCESSOR** allows sprites (there are 8 of them) to be 're-used' under some circumstances and offers **powerful windowing capabilities**, while a **block image transferrer** (blitter) speeds up large-scale graphics work enormously. **Resolution** is 640 x 200 with a palette of 4096. 16 colours can be used in high res, 32 in low res and 4096 in hold and modify. A **TV modulator** is extra, while the **Commodore A1081 monitor** weighs in at £349.99	● **Monitor Output:** SCART **COMPREHENSIVE SOUND** facilities include **stereo output**, 4 channels, 9 octaves, **built-in text to speech synthesis**, and programmable waveforms, amplitude and frequency modulation. **MIDI facilities** are not built-in, but third party **interfaces** are available.
IBM & COMPATIBLES			
IBM'S PC is the original, but the many clones include **Amstrad's PC1512** and **1640 series**, **Tandy's 1000EX**, **Spectrum Bondwell 32**, etc. Specifications given apply to most IBM compatibles unless particular riders are made. If you are thinking of buying a PC or compatible, check salient details with dealers first. **Packages** depend on the manufacturer. You can buy the bare bones or the whole works. **MEMORY** is usually between **512** and **640K**, while the **processor** is the **Intel 8086, 8088** or variants. ● **Recommended Retail Price:** From around £400 for the cheaper basic clones to £1500 for top-of-the-range clones (with hard disk, colour monitor etc.). IBM machines themselves are considerably more expensive.	**GOOD VALUE** packages like the Amstrad are worth going for, but if you know what you're doing even better bargains can be had from discount stores. If you don't know what you're doing go for a reputable brand. PCs can often be picked up **second-hand** in auctions of computer and office goods, or through magazine adverts. **Faulty machines** can be returned to the dealer, but a **maintenance contract** – often surprisingly cheap – can guarantee your peace of mind.	**THREE COMMON GRAPHICS STANDARDS** exist – CGA, EGA (Normally fitted as upgrade, but comes as standard on some PCs – eg Amstrad PC1640) and Hercules. Graphics are not provided as standard on PCs, although nowadays most are sold with the necessary add-on boards already installed. These three standards account for almost all cheap current PCs, but other adaptors do exist. Second hand PCs may have unusual or text-only displays. **RESOLUTION** with **CGA** (Colour Graphics Adaptor) is 320 x 200 in low res and 640 x 200 in medium res. **EGA** (Enhanced Graphics Adaptor) has both CGA graphics modes plus 640 x 350 high resolution, while the **Hercules** standard offers resolution of 720 x 348. **PALETTES** vary – **CGA** has none as such, just three different colour schemes in low res. **EGA** has a palette of 64, while **Hercules** is mono only, and is often built-in on mono PCs.	**COLOURS** available in **CGA** are 4 in low res and mono in high res. CGA is the most common PC colour standard; **EGA** offers 16 and **Hercules** is mono only. **TV** output is not supplied. There are no sprites, and graphics speed varies according to the software. ● **Monitor Output:** Normally RGB **POOR SPEAKER QUALITY** is a general characteristic. PCs are not really machines for the musician, especially in view of recent competition from Atari and Apple Macintosh. Stereo output is not provided, but third party **MIDI interfaces** are available.

GRADE GUIDE....

HARDWARE & SOFTWARE	IN BRIEF
THE BUILT-IN DRIVE is good and fast, and takes 3.5 inch disks holding a healthy 800K formatted. **Very comprehensive keyboard** includes programmable auto-repeat rate, but has a **surprisingly cheap feel** given the machine's quality. A **3- button mouse** comes with the machine, but a **joystick is not supported.** ● **Also provided:** RS423 serial, Centronics compatible parallel, 9-pin mouse socket, 3.5mm stereo jack, 64 way din, 41612 expansion port, IEC 320 video outlet and I/O interface (BBC compatible). **EXISTING SOFTWARE** is limited to the now-famous *Zarch* (ACE Rated 979) and a couple of databases from Minerva Systems. **Graphics potential** is enormous, with a couple of packages currently in the pipeline. **Powerful music possibilities** too, which the software houses have yet to pick up on though. ● **Prospects for the future** are very good, but not necessarily for games market, even though there is at least one more game on the way, together with a couple of adventures.	**ARCHIMEDES** – the cutting edge of micro technology... ...so it's not going to be cheap. Nor does it have the software base of longer-standing micros. It's a very exciting machine, but best left to the real enthusiasts – at least for now.
800K FORMATTED fits onto the 3.5in disks taken by the built-in drives, which are fast and reliable. The 81 keys of the standard keyboard include function keys and a numeric keypad. An optional extra is the **Apple Extended keyboard**, with 105 keys. Joystick is not supported, but a high quality one-button mouse is supplied. ● **Also provided:** SE 2 – Apple Desktop Bus connector; 2 RS232/RS422 serial; external disk drive; 96-pin Euro-Din expansion slot SCSI – DB-25 connector; External audio amplifier: II – 2 RS232/RS422 serial; DB-25 SCSI T. **A WIDE RANGE OF SOFTWARE** exists in virtually all fields except games. These are limited to a small selection of arcade games, but there are a number of adventures. **Business and DTP** fields are particularly well supported, but watch out for US software that hasn't been thoroughly tested. **Interesting graphics packages** for those interested in DIY publishing, while there's **lots of MIDI software** – but it's expensive stuff. ● **Prospects for the future** are excellent, especially in business and DTP.	**EXPENSIVE** and up-market machine for those keen on desk-top publishing, wimp systems and classy software – which is very expensive. Games are mostly limited to icon-driven adventures. Good for MIDI musicians, but be prepared to pay through the nose.
360K OR 720K fits onto a 3.5in disk, depending on whether the (built-in) drive is 0.5 or 1Mb. The keyboard has 96 keys including 10 function keys, and joystick ports are standard. A two-button mouse is supplied with the machine. ● **Also provided:** MIDI out (5 pin DIN); MIDI in (5 pin DIN); audio out; audio in; RGB monitor; mono monitor; serial/modem port; second disk; hard disk; mouse/joystick; joystick; cartridge; TV. **LIMITED SOFTWARE BASE** by 8-bit standards, but the Ataris are the **best-supported** of the new machines – Most major software houses convert their output to ST now, and several smaller houses specialise in ST titles. The range of **arcade titles** isn't bad, while **adventures** are rarer but generally very good. The only **fly in the ointment** is that a 360K disk can't hold a really large ST program, so **two-disk titles** are becoming increasingly common. The disk-changing these require can get tedious, especially where you've got to swap disks during play. There are several **first-rate graphics packages** around, and **musicians** are catered for very well indeed, with many companies producing sound editors, samplers, synths, etc. ● **Prospects for the future** are very bright, and the Atari could soon rival the Spectrum and C64 for numbers of new releases.	**EXCELLENT** general-purpose home machine for games, small businesses, and productivity – it's the number one choice for MIDI musicians. The ST's price could still give it the edge for artists over the Amiga. One of the first machines to feature a disk drive in the side of the console, this design has now been taken up by other manufacturers.
A WHOLE 880K formatted fits onto the Amiga's **3.5in disks**, which are loaded via a surprisingly **sluggish and noisy drive**. The 94 key keyboard includes 10 function keys, a numeric keypad and separate cursor cluster. A mouse is supplied as standard. ● **Also provided:** Two joystick/mouse; audio output left and right; extra disk drive; serial RS232; centronics parallel; RGB/video; monochrome video; expansion bus **SMALL SOFTWARE BASE** in comparison to 8-bit machines, but releases are just beginning to pick up. **Arcade games** are not yet up to the capabilities of the machine, but the few adventures so far released are generally of good quality. The quality and range of **graphics** products is outstanding, which the **music potential** of the Amiga is superb. There's **little MIDI support** as yet, though. ● **Prospects for the future** are good, but the A500 needs to establish a larger user-base before becoming a prime development machine.	**STUNNING SPECIFICATION,** and despite initial uncertainty software support now seems assured. Although overshadowed by the ST in the UK to date, overseas sales (particularly in US) are high. An excellent machine for those who can afford one.
5.25in DISKS are used by PCs as a rule, but some very new models do use **3.5in disks**. Capacity is almost always **360K** formatted. Performance is generally reliable and pretty fast – faster still, of course, with hard disks. All models include function keys and separate numeric keypads. A wide variety of **third-party keyboards** is available. Two **different joystick standards** exist – IBM (analogue) and Amstrad (Atari style – the norm for games playing). Most games support either IBM or both, but Amstrads can now be adapted to use IBM joystick. Newer models (eg Amstrad) include mouse in package. **Third party mice** are available for mouseless PCs. ● **Also provided:** Various interfaces can be expected to include centronics parallel; RS232; plus expansion port with most machines. Some of these are optional. **A VAST SOFTWARE BASE** already exists for PCs, with releases still pouring out. Price levels are dropping as well. Cheaper machines have meant that **more and more games** are being released on the PC – both arcade and adventure types. The **CGA graphics standard** used to be predominant, but an increasing number of **EGA games** with superior graphics are appearing. The PC has only recently been perceived as a machine with games potential. Many sophisticated business graphics packages exist, but there's not much for the artist. Musicians can choose from a fair selection of – expensive – MIDI packages and interfaces. ● **Prospects for the future** are good, since releases aren't likely to dwindle as long as there are PCs on desks.	**BUSINESS ORIGINS** of the PC can't be disguised, but for all that they represent superb value if you want an all-round machine. Increasing numbers of games software releases include few of the coin-op arcade variety though, and PCs are definitely not to be considered if entertainment is your first priority.

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THE ACE PUZZLE No3

Set by Archie Medes

You may remember that last month Professor Hex was given a tricky problem to solve by his colleague Professor Browze. Now Professor Hex is able to get his revenge with this little teaser!

'I am thinking of three different digits which I shall call A, C and E. If I were to place them in the order ACE, the three-digit number so formed would be a prime number. The same arrangement of digits is also to be found as the central three digits of a five-digit multiple of 53, a seven-digit perfect square, and a nine-digit perfect cube:'

ACE	(a three-digit prime)
ACE	(a multiple of 53)
ACE	(a perfect square)
ACE	(a perfect cube)

(The stars represent other digits which may, or may not, include those represented by A, C, and E).

'Can you tell me what these values are?'

The following day Professor Browze tackled Professor Hex about the problem.

'You'll have to give me more information. I can find lots of answers!'

'Quite correct', replied Hex, 'If I were to tell

PUZZLE ENTRY FORM

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

....

COMPUTER OWNED ....

....

I think the numbers are:-

_ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

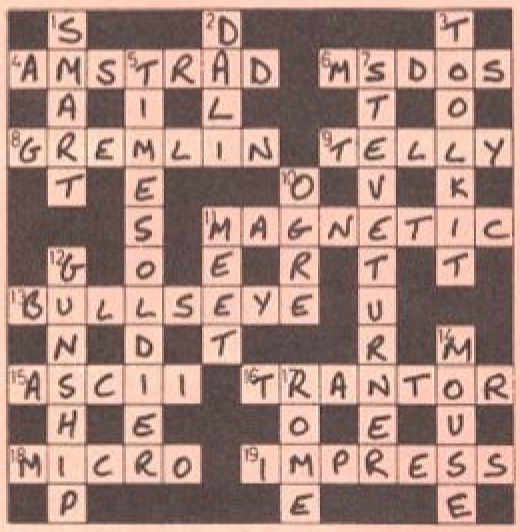
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

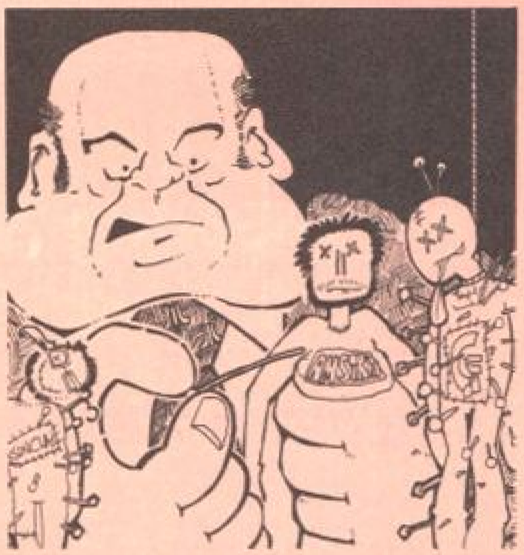
Send your answers to: **PRIZE PUZZLE 3, ACE, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ**

Closing date June 10th.

SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD No1



Prize Crossword winner was
Mr S.J. Lee from Huntingdon.



you that the prime number is the same number that you have on your car registration plate, you should find the solution.'

It didn't take Professor Browze long to solve the problem, but can you? Also could you devise a simple listing to get your micro to solve it for you?

NOTES FOR NON-MATHEMATICIANS:

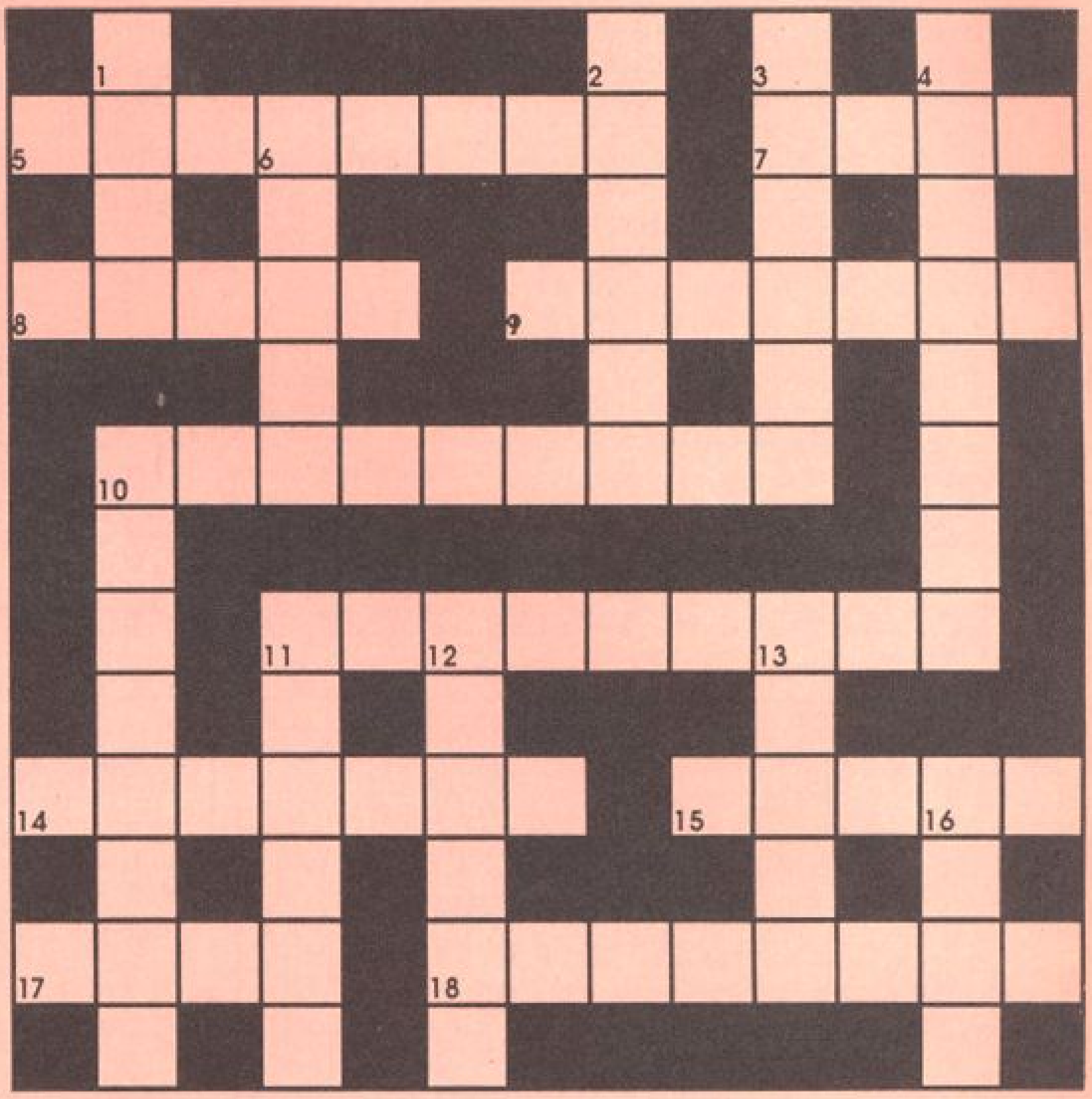
A prime number is one that is not divisible by any number other than itself or 1. For example, 7,11,13 and 29 are prime numbers. A perfect square is the square of a whole number. Thus 1,4,9,16 and 25 are perfect squares of the numbers 1 to 5 respectively. Similarly, perfect cubes are the cubes of whole numbers.

ACE PRIZE CROSSWORD 3

Set by Mips.

The first correct entry taken from the postbag wins software worth £25.00. Closing dates for entries June 10th.

The ACE crossword is cryptic. The answer might be an anagram, or formed from the end of one word and the beginning of another, or simply another word hinted at by the clue. Most – but not quite all – of the answers are computer-related.



Across

5. Programs that aren't hard (8)
7. Rule out enticement (4)
8. Early form of electronic switch control (5)
9. Number a student opposed to analog (7)
10. A game of chess (9)
11. Valiant, he played the game (9)
14. Fortification – a singular game from Future Concepts (7)
15. Sweet Alan (5)
17. Woman's love for brave man (4)
18. A screen I adapted to make it larger (8)

Down

1. Basic command in spoken English (4)
2. I rent a program essential for vision (6)
3. Killed, say, in game from Martech (6)
4. Strange reaction to software house (8)
6. Time to read about deal (5)
10. Falls for software house's product (8)
11. Portable computer that's apt to cut out? (3-3)
12. Unsullied software house (6)
13. Home company (5)
16. In addition is found in special software (4)

CROSSWORD ENTRY FORM

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

COMPUTER OWNED ....

PRIZE CROSSWORD 3, ACE, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ.
Closing date June 10th.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No1

The correct substitution was 401956 = 634

– and the first correct entry out of the hat came from **Alan Richardson of Shrewsbury**.

Rather than start with the six-digit number and find its square root, it's quicker (and mathematically a lot safer!) to start with the three-digit number and compute the square of this. A simple calculation shows that for a three-digit number to have a six-digit square, that number must lie in the range 317 to 999. In the program listing (written in standard BASIC) these values are tested in turn in the FOR/NEXT loop. The corresponding value for 'ENIGMA' is then computed and the two values for ACE and ENIGMA are converted to string variables A$ and E$ respectively.

From the alphamatic, we know the first digit of ACE is the same as the final digit of ENIGMA. Similarly, the two E's occur in both words. The corresponding numbers are therefore tested in lines 130 and 140. Should a match not occur in either of these two lines, the current value of ACE is rejected.

Once this test has been passed it is necessary to determine that all other digits are different. We must remember to include the C of ACE so this is appended to ENIGMA and the resulting seven digits are held in Z$. The routine at lines 160 to 200 tests each of these digits against each of the others, a flag initially set to 0 being reset to 1 if a match is found. Any values passing this test (in this case only the one) are printed out.

Above is a suggested listing for solving the alphamatic.

Note: this listing will run on any machine capable of using Microsoft BASIC.

```
100 FOR ACE = 317 TO 999
110 ENIGMA = ACE*ACE
120 A$=STR$(ACE):E$=STR$(ENIGMA)
125 IF LEFT$(A$,1)=" " THEN A$=MID$(A$,2):E$=MID$(E$,2)
130 IF MID$(A$,1,1)<>MID$(E$,6,1)THEN 220
140 IF MID$(A$,3,1)<>MID$(E$,1,1)THEN 220
150 Z$=E$+MID$(A$,2,1)
160 FLAG=0
170 FOR F = 1 TO 6
180 FOR G = F+1 TO 7
190 IF MID$(Z$,F,1)=MID$(Z$,G,1) THEN FLAG=1
200 NEXT G:NEXT F
210 IF FLAG=0 THEN PRINT A$;" ";E$
220 NEXT ACE
```

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The space which YOU fill

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We're particularly keen to receive entries to the Helpline offering assistance on particular games you may have solved – adventures or others. Or offering technical expertise on aspects of particular machines.

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Here's a great way of receiving free advice from public-spirited readers. If you make use of this service, please respect the Helpline code:

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- Do not make phone calls at anti-social hours.

• Bureaucracy, Knight Orc, Guild of Thieves, Pawn, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Wishbringer, Zork 1, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Snowball, Worm in paradise, Price of Magic, Lord of the Rings, Kings Quest II, Hulk, Spiderman, Dungeon Adventures, Colossal Adventures, Adventure Quest, Macbeth I, II & IV, Fourth Protocol I, II & III, Jinxter, Hollywood Hijinx, Trinity, Moonmist, Cutthroats, Zork II & III, Gnome Ranger (Part 1), Starcross, Leisuresuit Larry in the Land of Lounge Lizards, A Mind Forever Voyaging, Lurking Horror

RGB Marshall, 3 Mereside Avenue, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4JZ.
Tel: 0260 279786.

• I have completed the following: The Pawn, The Bard's Tale, Ultima IV, Phantasie I, Dracula, Never Ending Story, Zork III, Wishbringer, Enchanter, Borrowed Time, Kobyashi Naru, Heavy on the Magick, Legacy, The prince of Magic, Claws of Despair, Wizards & The Princess.

Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey. CR4 8EB.

• Wishbringer, Labyrinth, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Spiderman, Seabase Delta, Kobyashi Naru.

Ann Gray, 9 Alness Close, Birchwood, Lincoln, Lincs. LN6 0YX.

• Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchhikers Guide, Lurking Horror, Infidel, Leather Goddesses, Planetfall, Wishbringer, Zork I, II, III, Guild of Thieves, Pawn, Gnome Ranger, Adventure Quest, Aftershock, Angelique A Grief Encounter, Arnold Blackwood Trilogy, Big Sleeze, Bugsy, Black Fountain, Castle Blackstar, Castle Skull Lord, Crystal Theft, Cursed be the City, Dracula, Dungeons Amethyst, Alchemist n Everythin'. Escape From Khoshima, Espionage Island, Fantasia Diamond, Forest At Worlds End, Gremlins, Haunted House, The Hermitage, Heroes of Karn, The Hollow Grapic, The Hollow Text, Hunchback, Imagination, Jewels of Darkness, Jade Stone, Kobyashi Naru, Kingdom of Hamil, Lord of the Mansion, Message of Andromeda, Mindshadow, Monsters of Murdac, Lifeterm, Mordens Quest, Mountains of Ket, Necris Dome, Never Ending Story, Nova, Nythyhel, Planet of Death, Questprobe, Rebel Planet, Rigels Revenge, Robin of Sherwood, Robicide, Seabase Delta, Shard of Inovar, Sharpes Deeds, Ship of Doom, Case of the Mixed-up Shymer, Smashes, Sould of Darkon, Spytrek, Starwreck, Subsunk, Thesus, Top Secret, Very Big Cave Adventure, Warlord, Winter Wonderland, Wizard of Akryz.

Graham Wheeler, 2 Burford Close, Southdown, Bath, Avon, BA2 1JF.
Tel: 0225 26919.

• The Pawn, Sorcerer, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses of Phobos.

C.F.H. Bass, 21 Third Close, E Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9PW.

• Heroes of Karn, Imagination, Seabase Delta, D,A,A n Everythin, Fourht Protocol I, II & III, Ship of Doom, Message from Andromeda, Kobyashi Naru, Questprobe III, Forest at Worlds End, Wild Bunch, Knight Tyme, Spellbound, The Hobbit, Bugsy Part 1 only, Mops To, Heroes of Karn, Seabase Delta, Gremlins, Lord of the Rings (Part II only), Robin of Sherwood, After Shock.

Russell Cooper, 12 Butlers Close, 52 Butlers Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham. B20 2PA.

• Adventure Quest, Aftershock, Apache Gold, Arnold Goes to Somewhere Else, Boggit, Bored of the Rings, Brawn Free, Castle Blackstar, Castle of Skull Lord, Classic Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Colour of Magic, Crystal Theft, Dodgy Geezers, Dracula, Dungeon Adventure, Dungeons, A,A 'n Everythin, Emerald Isle, Enchanter, Erik The Viking, Escape from Khoshima, Espionage Island, Fantasia Diamond, Forest at Worlds Ends, Heavy on the Magick, Heroes of Karn, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Hobbit, Imagination, Inca Curse, Jewels of Babylon, Kentilla, Lords of Time, Message of Andromeda, Mindshadow, Morden's Quest, Necris Dome,Never Ending Story, Price of Magik, Project Volcano, Qor, Questprobe III, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Seabase Delta, Seas of Blood, Smugglers Cove, Snowball, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spytrek, Subsunk, Sydney Affair, Terrormolinos, The Case of the mixed-up Shymer, The Trial of Arnold Blackwood, Vera Cruz Affair, Very Big Cave Adventure, Warlord, Wise and Fool of Blackwood, Worm in Paradise, Zork I

Joan Pancott. Telephone 0305 784155 – Any Day – Noon to 10pm.

• For technical help on Commodore 64 Basic and Machine/Assembler language. Please contact Johnathan Kendall (for most problems would you please write!) I will endeavour to reply to all letters – if you enclose a stamped addressed envelope!

Johnathan Kendall, 27 Bishop Bridge Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 4ES.
Tel: 0603 625987

The Pawn, Sorceror, Planetfall, Leather Goddess of Phobos, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy

Colin Bass, 21 Third Close, E Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9PW.

The Pawn plus early stages for Guild of Thieves (I've only scored 300+ points so far).

Clive, 66 Billett Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1DR.

I can help Spectrum owner with GAC, +2 loading problems, removing attribute clash + any basic programming problems, GAC, PAW and I also have an extensive knowledge if ZX BASIC. I can help fellow P B Mers on Hade Games 'Avalon'. Just send an SAE to:

Matt Burke, 33 Brookhouse Hill, Fulwood, Sheffield, S10 3TB.

Jack The Ripper (p1-3), Dracule (p1-3), Hampstead, Big Sleeze and others.

N Buzzard, 11 Faversham Drive, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS24 9NZ.

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● **SPECTRUM 128K**, joystick interface, cassette deck, mags, (Crash, YS, SU) and over £260 of software. (Cobras, Sidewize, Hitpak, Outrun, etc.) Worth over £500. Bargain only £175ono. Phone 01 337 4034.

● **CBM 64** for sale, over £250 worth of software, joystick, Freeze Frame 4, all boxed. Excellent condition with mags, £220ono. Phone (0858) 880537 after 6pm.

● **AMSTRAD 464**, green monitor, over £750 software, lightpen, joystick, worth £1000, will sell for £200. Tel. 061 682 4780, after 6pm.

● **SPECTRUM AND ST** original software, RAM print printer interface, Ferguson data recorder, Crash magazines issue 13-45. Phone Mark (0727) 62082 or 12 Villiers Crescent, St. Albans, Herts. AL4 9HY for free list.

● **CBM64** C2N doubler with software reset switch, 2 joysticks (Euromax Pro plus Cheetah Mach 1 plus). Loads of mags, £300 of software Zynaps, Buggy Boy, 720 etc. All boxed. All for £270. Phone 021 550 6489.

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● **AMSTRAD MONO 464**, DMP 2000, disc drive, Multiface 3, 64K RAM expansion, joystick, over £700 software. Sell for £400. Will Split. Send for complete list. David White, Earnshaw Hall, Sheffield, S10 3EG.

● **SPECTRUM PLUS 3**, multiface 3, joystick, over £100 or software, blank discs, leads, cover. Still boxed, perfect condition, guaranteed until December. Worth over £350 sell £240. Tel: 0884 259457.

● **SPECTRUM PLUS 2**, joystick, £350 of games, E.6, Platoon, Rampage, etc. Case that holds 32 games £180 for all Margaret Walker, 32 Kirkfield Road, Withernsea, North Humberside, HU19 2JZ. 0964 614509.

● **CBM 64** disk drive, tape deck, freeze machine, action replay 4, over £700 worth of software, 2 joysticks, sell £300ono. Ring 061 799 9273 after 5pm.

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● **COMMODORE 64** six months old, C2N datasette unit, over 70 software titles Music Maker plus keyboard. Bargain £150! Phone 01 940 7532.

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● **ATARI ST FM** latest o/s plus latest software including Ikari Warriors and Supersprint, Xmas present VGC worth over £500 new. Sell for £325 or swap for Amiga. Tel: 01 670 9026.

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● **SPECTRUM PLUS**, Upgrade, printer, VTX 5000, Kempston and Cheetah interface, 007 interface, data recorder, interface one, lots of games. £200ono Tel: Medway 0634 815191.

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● **ATARI 520 ST FM**, mouse, joystick, games, mags. Still guaranteed, 40 disks (blank). Good condition. £280. Phone 021 748 5104 ask for Steve. Phone after 6pm.

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● **128K plus 3**, datarecorder, manual, 50 mags, over £500 of original software including over £200 on disk with original instructions. Package worth over £750. Sell for £320 including postage. Phone 021 440 3953 Farooq.

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● **SPECTRUM 128K** excellent condition, tape deck, joystick, dustcover, extension lead, interface. All boxed over £200. Software over £550. Magazines over £300. Sell for £150ono. Write to 29 Usher Road, Bow, London E3 2HA.

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● **NINTENDO** D/Screen games, Pinball, Green House, Donkey Kong. Worth £25 each sell for £12 each or £30 for the 3. Contact Steve, 116 Oakfield Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 4JJ. Tel: 0373 62381.

● **BBC B DFS**, disc drive, AMX mouse, super art and ROM, tape recorder, over £400 software, loads of games, joysticks, mags & manuals. All £400ono can sell seperately. Tel: Paul after 6pm 06845 63343.

● **SPECTRUM 48K**, interface, 1 micro drive interface, 2 joysticks, TTX 2000s modem makes TV into teletext using computer. Lots of games. Bargain £175ono. Ring 0287 33023.

● **SPECTRUM** and Opus Discovery Disk System, (parallel printer, monitor, through and Kempston joystick ports). Latest software on disk, loads any game within about 30 seconds. £150. Anthony (0696) 72395.

● **C64c**, Master41 disk drive, Citizen 120d printer, freeze utility, datasette. Fully boxed, only bought October 1987, £450ono. Will split. Useful programs, games and accessories. Ring Justin, 01 851 0213 after 7pm.

● **COMMODORE 64**, 1541 disk drive, datasette, Action Replay Mk 4, 100 disks, over £400 worth of software. Will swap for Atari STFM or sell for £300. Tel: Robert, Sheffield (0742) 472078.

● **AMSTRAD DD1** disc drive for sale. One month old, very good working condition, still boxed. Will sell for £120ono for quick sale. Tel: (0292) 591854 after 5pm.

● **COMMODORE 128**, excelerator drive, 2 C2N tapedecks, plus £450 of original tape and disk stuff!. Freeze Machine, joysticks etc. All for £250ono. Call Ian on Ascot (0990) 24953.

● **SPECTRUM 48k**, Quickshot Joystick, Kempston Interface, Spectrum and £100 of software. Only £100 . Everything is in good condition. Phone (0786) 75475 after 6pm and ask for Gregor.

● **UNBEATABLE** 3 1/2 disc prices double sided double density quantity, 10 price 9.95. Ring Steve or Richard on 0782 773808 and 311471 anytime after 6pm any day. Aniga Users Group.

● **AMSTRAD CPC 6128** with colour mod and green screen over £150 worth of software. Will sell for £270ono. Contact L.Bedford, 18 Eastgate Street, Winchester, Hants. SO23 8EB.

● **SPECTRUM PLUS 2** £300 worth of games plus joystick and mags. Worth over £500. Asking £175. Phone Philip after school hours 0277 218501.

● **BOULDERDASH IV** caves for Atari ST many to choose from:- Puzzle, Timing, and others. For catalogue send 20p plus sae to G. Buchan, 15 Denovan Crescent, Kippen, Stirling, FK8 3HJ.

WANTED

● **THE HOBBIT**, C64 disk or cassette. Will pay a good price if book and instructions are included. Please write to: Lisa Fine, 110 Park Crescent, Harrow Weald, Middlesex, HA3 6ET.

● **SWAP CBM64** with £200 of software and mags etc. and Sega Master System with 8 games for Atari ST with lots of games. Tel: (0900) 832348.

● **THE FRIENDS OF MABEL PRITCHARD SCHOOL** for mentally handicapped children want your old computer games to raise funds . Send your unwanted games to C.B. Allen, 29 Napier Road, Cowley, Oxford.

● **COMMODORE 128D** with or without addons. Must be in full working order. Price no idea! Contact Simon Glister, 121 Salisbury Road, Totton, Soton, Hants. SO4 3HZ. By post only please. TA!

● **DESPERATE** for Atari ST printer. Has to be in good working order, don't mind appearance. Will offer up to £70. Phone (0579) 47039, evenings. 34 Rapson Road, Pengover Estate, Liskeard PL14 3NX.

PEN PALS

● **AMIGA CONTACTS WANTED** Write to Toby, 38 Fontenaye Road, Coton Green, Tamworth, Staffs. B79 8JU.

● **ATARI ST OWNER** wants pen pals any age. All letters replied to. Write C. Newby, Langdale, Fildraw Road, Ballasallon, Isle of Man. P.S. I have over £4000 of software.

● **AMIGA CONTACTS WANTED** Forget the rest, try the best! Overseas welcome. I will reply quickly to one and all. Write to: J.M., 48 Loanfoot Crescent, Uphall, West Lothian, EH52 6DN, Scotland.

● **AMIGA OWNDER** wants pen pals all over the world interested in games, demos, programming. Contact Simon at 94 Robin Hood Lane, Helsby, Cheshire, WA6 9NH England. All letters get a reply.

● **AMIGA PENPALS WANTED**. New owner. Write to: Martin Neylon, 1 Walsall Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 2EH. All letters answered.

● **I AM A FINNISH AMIGA USER** INTERESTED IN MEETING ANY OTHER Amiga Users in the World. If you are interested write to: Jukka Nevalainen, Kettuvaarante 16 AG, 80260 Joensuu, Finland.

● **AMIGA CONTACTS WANTED**, I wih to swap hints, tips, etc., for my super computer, write to David Fernandez, 7 New Pastures, Cuerden Green, Lostock Hall, Nr. Preston, Lancs, PR5 5YL.

● **ATARI ST** contacts wanted from all over the world. Guaranteed reply. Must be trustworthy. Mark at 19 Chilworth Close, Aston, Birmingham, B64 4UH. Tel: 021 359 5576. Between 7-10pm.

● **AMIGA CONTACTS WANTED** Write to Russell Wallace, 24 Lower Georges Street, Dunlaoehaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland. Phone (01) 807094

● **AMIGA!** I am a boy in Finland interested in penpals. If you are interested then write soon to: Jouni Niemela, Kalevankatu 5 a A 5, 80110 Joensuu, Finland.

● **SPECTRUM PLUS 3** owner, 13. Would like hints, tips and anything else, games, programs etc. Guaranteed reply Darren, Shepherd, 35 Alfred Prior House, Grantham Road, Manor Park, London, E12 5NA

● **AMIGA OWNERS** write now to the H.C.S. at 44 Havencrest Drive, Leicester, LE5 2AG England, or phone (0533) 763506 after 1pm.

● **ATARI ST** contacts wanted to swap hints and tips etc 100% reply. Send to Les Cond, Flat 6, Block 14, Shorters Avenue, Yardley Wood, Birmingham, B14 4BA. Thank You.

● **ATARI ST OWNERS!** Pen pals wanted. I love all kinds of games. Guaranteed reply ring Stuart on 0202 734747.

● **AMIGA** contacts wanted. Write to Lee, 106 Aldykes, Hatfield, Hets, AL10 8EE. SAE guaranteed reply.

● **DUTCH ATARI 1040 STF OWNER**, 30 years old, is looking for a good pen pal. Please write to: Kees Maas, Van Pedestr 14, 5622 BG Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

● **AMIGA** pen pals wanted, from all over the globe. Will swap hints, tips, etc. Anyone interested? Andy Johnson, 56 Avenue Vivian, Fenhouses, Houghton le Spring, Tyne & Wear, DH4 6HY.

● **PENPAL AGENCY!** send details, eg. favourite poultry food, etc. and enclose 35p for postage and my efforts! Post in general direction 'of Nick, The Boldings, Astley Abbotts, Bridgnorth, Shrops. WV16 4SS.

USER GROUPS

● **ATARI CLUB** (Nationwide) seeks new members. Benefits include magazine and PD library service. Interested? For more details send SAE to Roy Smith PO Box 3, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8LR. Phone (0702) 617307.

● **ST CLUB**, New. Send sae for more details or £2.50 membership. Write to L. Riby, 133 Sutton Road, Hull, HU6 7DP. Wanted PD Software. Free membership for any donations. Thanks.

OTHER

● **ANY EXPERIENCED AMIGA PROGRAMMERS OUT THERE**, maybe want to start a company up or something? Just write anyway. Paul Rolles, Bassett Wood House, Bassett Wood Drive, Southampton, Hampshire SO2 3PT.

● **FUTURISTIC PBM**; World of Dreadlok a real PBM role playing game. Cheque/PO £2.00 for rulebook. start-up and 2 free turns to: N. Robinson, "Tree Tops", Red Lane, Kenilworth, Warks. CV8 1PB.

● **THE CHEAT MACHINE** The Cheat Machine costs £1 monthly, available on the 1st of every month. 40 pages of cheats, news, reviews, special features, editorial, letters, arcade helpline etc. Issue 1 out May 1st, features: Arcade Helpline, a great new idea and over 75 cheats including, Pacland, Platoon, Battle Valley, UCM, Ball II, Special Agent, Sunburst, Zybex, Zaga Mission, Spore, Anarchy, Rastan, Quedex, Batty, Snap Dragon, Thundercats, Bangkok Knights, Renegade, Crazy Comets (new), Pile Up, Wiz, Mountie Mick plus many many more. TCM is the one to get for Special offers, free gifts, whatever. At just £1, cheques/POs only, its great value for money! Issue 2 is better still — there's letters, an adventure column, high scores, etc. Send cheques/POs to Robert Troughton, 42 Browfield Terrace, Silsden, Keighley, W. Yorks. BD20 9PT.

● **ST/AMIGA** owners wanted for games witing co-op. Programmers, artists, designers or anyone with something to contribute. Send sae to PC(A), 7 Westbourne Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester, M25 7RW.

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THE BLITTER END...

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT...

From one Charlie to another, as it were, courtesy of US Gold. To plug their forthcoming Charlie Chaplin game, those wacky Gold chaps have shoved marketing manager Richard Tidsall into a dinner suit and – good grief! What HAVE they put on his head? Marketing assistant Danielle Woodyatt ('You can call me Woody') can't take her eyes off it and small wonder – it's nothing less than incredible! (Our millinery correspondent writes: of all the many interesting hats featured in the Blitter End from time to time, this is probably the most technically advanced. The high-gloss Teflon coating is a must for modern slapstick – custard pies wipe off in seconds! – and would doubtless have been an enormous boon to Chaplin himself.)

LAPTOPS AND TREETOPS

British Telecom's newest micro is the M5183, a portable PC 'ideal for business people on the move' which is 'as much at home in a taxi as on an office desk'. Anyone tempted to snigger over the totally forgettable name might care to reflect that a snappy handle isn't always a blessing for a new micro – compare the fate of the Dragon or Lynx with that of the CPC6128 or 520STFM.

Looks like BT are just keeping up with modern trends on that front then, but computing in taxis? That's nothing! Comedian-cum-conservationist Bill Oddie uses them in much more exciting places than that, and we've got the photographs to prove it. Bird-spotter Bill's been drumming up support for the *British Trust for Conservation Volunteers* by, amongst other things, answering questions about the BTCV's work (he's their Vice President) on Micronet's *Celebrity Chatline*. Said ex-Goodie Bill, 'Prince Charles hit the nail on the head when he said conservationists need a more up-to-date image'. Would the Rt Hon Norman Tebbit care to add anything to that perhaps?

I'VE WON? IMPOSSIBLE!

Yes folks, it's time to dish out those goodies put up for grabs by the oh-so-generous Epyx back in ACE Issue Seven. The three first prize winners (who each collect a Z88 portable computer) are:

T. Robinson, Hove
Jonathan Wade, Chelmsford
Mr N. Burn, Hexham

The 25 runners up (who each win a free copy of *Impossible Mission II*) are:

Michael Gray, Oldham. **Guy Cockroft**, Derby. **Irving McLeod**, Gateshead. **Richard Swash**, Leeds. **A. Geoffrey**, Eyemouth. **Steven Knight**, Clifton. **C. Symons**, Purley. **Richard Batey**, Pontypool. **Simon Duncan**, Marsden. **Martin Rawlinson**, Fakenham. **Margaret Keaveny**, Sutton Coldfield. **Michael Kearney**, Belfast. **Stephen Stothard**, Chelmsford. **Jason McCauley**, Bristol. **Daniel Maharry**, Margate. **Mike Dack**, Lingwood. **James Duncan**, Purley. **Chris Kaye**, Bromborough. **J Farby**, Sutton-in-ashfield. **Kevin Butts**, Bury St Edmonds. **K.B.Lewis**, Barrow-in-furness. **Chris Birbeck**, Whitehaven. **Wendy Royle**, Manchester. **Rob Houghton**, Stoke-on-trent. **Richard Ormson**, Bury.

All of these people were smart enough to know that:

1. Robert Vaughan (b) played Napoleon Solo in *The Man From UNCLE*.
2. George Lazenby (b) played James Bond in *OHMSS*.
3. Harry Palmer was played by Michael Caine (c) (and not a lot of people know that).
4. Patrick McNee (c) was Steed in *The Avengers*.
5. Alec Guinness (b) played Smiley in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, and
6. Roger Moore (b) was the original *Saint*.

ANDY'S KNEES AND BOOMPSY DAISY

Fearless ACE staffer Andy Smith's been hobbling round the office with torn ligaments for most of this issue. The cause? Why, failing to drop back in straight after a Smith Stop (no relation) at the top of a half-pipe, that's what. Yes, Andy's a determined (and now battle-scarred) skateboarder in what little spare time the strict-but-fair ACE schedules allow him. He'll be sticking to *Skate or Die* and *720 °* for a little while, but that probably won't stop him using such phrases as 'well wicked' or 'rad' around the office. (What's wrong with plain old 'Cowabunga!', the rest of us'd like to know.)

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